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# LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

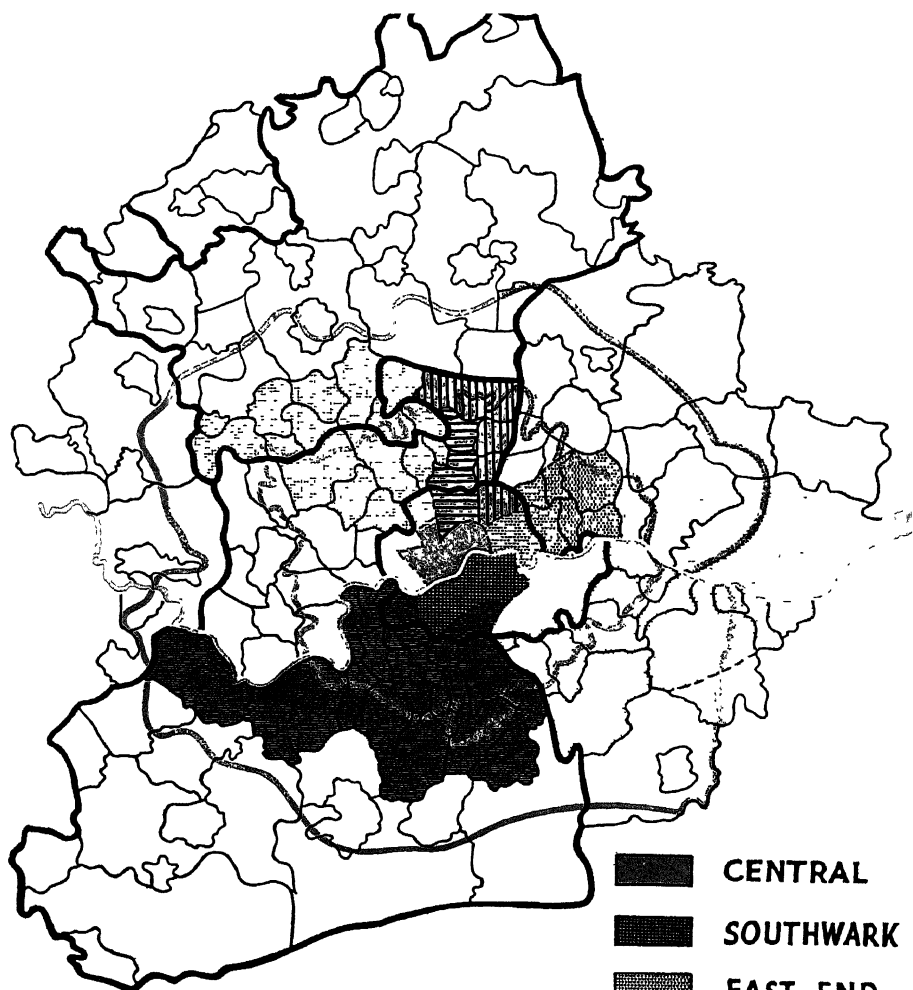
PROFESSOR COLE has also written the following, among other, books on monetary and economic problems, as well as a number of works on social and economic history, Socialism and kindred questions, some volumes of verse and detective stories. A number of these books have been written in collaboration with his wife, Margaret Cole:

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




*Edited by* G. D. H. COLE:

What Everybody wants to know about Money, by Nine Economists from Oxford.





== BOUNDARIES OF THE GREEN BELT

-  CENTRAL
-  SOUTHWARK
-  EAST END
-  NORTH-EAST
-  SOUTH
-  SOUTH-EAST
-  WEST
-  NORTH-WEST
-  NORTH (a)
-  NORTH (b)

GREATER LONDON

# LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

by  
G. D. H. COLE



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## P R E F A C E

THE first Report of the Local Government Boundary Commission was published after the text of this book had gone to the press.<sup>1</sup> This Report gives what I have written a fresh urgency, if indeed my proposals are worth considering at all; for it seems likely, in view of the Commission's proceedings and declared intentions, that plans for the re-drawing of local boundaries will be well advanced before the present year (1947) is out. It is not, indeed, yet clear whether the Commission will find itself able to carry through such changes as it may deem desirable under its existing powers, or will need to go back to the Government with proposals for fresh legislation, or at the least for a revised mandate. If its plans do turn out to involve legislation, as they are bound to do in order to be adequate to the need, the question of priority will of course arise, and any projected Bill will have to contend for a place among the measures claiming an allowance of parliamentary time. In that event, the effective decision may be delayed; but if the Commission can get what they want by a revision of their terms of reference under existing parliamentary powers, the entire question may be speedily settled without any real appeal to public opinion. I do not want this to happen, both because I believe the changes required go far beyond what could possibly be done in this way, and also because I want the problems of Local Government to be settled democratically, to the accompaniment of lively public comment, and not by a process of negotiation and agreement between the Commission and the Local Authorities, with the general public knowing almost nothing about what is being done. In the present state of apathy about the general, as distinct from the particular local problems involved, there is a real danger of this happening—the more so because Local Government presents politically a ticklish issue, which it may well suit the convenience of Cabinet and Parliament to settle, if they can, without public opinion being aroused.

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Local Government Boundary Commission for the year 1946. (H. C. 83), 1947.

## PREFACE

So far the Commission, in its recommendations published up to the middle of 1947, has contented itself with comparatively small boundary adjustments and extensions; but both its Report for 1946 and its subsequent proceedings show that it is at any rate considering the expediency of much larger changes. The amalgamation of a number of the less populous Counties, both in Eastern England and in Wales, is being discussed; and—what is much further-reaching in its implications—the entire question of the extent and status of County Boroughs is being examined. Proposals have been put forward, from South-East Lancashire, for the creation of a new type of County Area, or “conurban” Regional Authority, such as I have recommended in this book, big enough to include a number of existing County and Non-County Boroughs and Urban Districts; and there are also proposals, such as I have rejected, for reorganizing the whole country, or at least a large part of it, under the jurisdiction of big, predominantly urban authorities of a county borough type, in the sense that they would take over the entire range of local government functions in their areas and would administer them under the same unified control as exists within the County Boroughs of to-day.

The advocates of this solution, and of others resembling it, usually lay stress on the virtues of what is called “One-Tier” Local Government—that is, of the concentration of all local services in each area in the hands of a single authority. At present, about 13 million persons in England and Wales are living under this type of Local Government—in the 83 County Boroughs—whereas about 28 millions are living under “Two-Tier” Local Government in London or in the areas of the 61 other Administrative Counties. Even apart from any general proposal to reconstitute local government areas on the lines just mentioned, proposals sent in to the Boundary Commission by individual authorities up to the end of 1946 would, if granted, increase the population of the County Boroughs by 6 millions and would deprive the Administrative Counties of more than a quarter of their population and of their rateable value.

Most of these proposals have as their object either the extension of the areas of existing County Boroughs to include their suburbs and, in some cases, a good deal of their rural

bouring towns which have become in effect parts of larger conurbations. They appear, then, to rest upon quite natural aspirations to provide each real "city" with a unified government of its own. But, apart from the disaster which the granting of them would bring to a good many Counties (Lancashire, for example, would lose nearly two-thirds of the population of its Administrative County as it is to-day), the consequence would be to obliterate over a large area the smaller units of Local Government, many of which stand for real communities, even if these communities are also parts of the bigger "cities" to which they are attached.

Is this necessary? Does the creation of efficient larger units of Local Government, or the unified planning and general administration of great cities, really call for the abolition of all smaller units of government within their frontiers? Is "One-Tier" Local Government really to be desired *anywhere*? My argument in this book is that, so far from seeking to put all local powers in each area into the hands of a single authority, we should aim rather at drawing a line between powers which require unified administration over large areas and powers which can be better administered on a smaller scale, in close contact with the individuals and households affected by their use; and similarly that we should seek to differentiate between planning and executive action—because many things that call for co-ordinated planning over large areas can best be carried into effect under the auspices of relatively small-scale authorities. I am asking in this book for an approach to the problem different from that which appears to be postulated in the Boundary Commission's Report; for I am urging that need exists to make local government areas bigger and smaller at one and the same time. I am sure that it will be a disaster if a holocaust is made of the smaller authorities in the supposed interests of unified planning and administration, just as much as if the resistance of the existing Administrative Counties and County Districts to major changes is allowed to obstruct the unification of our cities in respect of functions which do imperatively demand co-ordinated planning and, in some cases, for centralized executive action as well.

The Boundary Commission has been proceeding so far on a plan of investigation which appears to be, on the whole,

## PREFACE

sensible and likely to reduce friction to a minimum. It has given priority to the claims of a limited number of areas in which for one reason or other the need for reform seems to be particularly pressing; and it has acted, in these areas, by the method of informal conference with each local authority affected, followed by local investigations which have been made as informal as possible. This procedure leaves it open to any local authority, when the Commission brings forward any positive proposal affecting it, to insist on an official and public local inquiry in accordance with the terms of the Act by which the Commission itself was set up; but it is hoped that the informal procedure will at any rate do a good deal to reduce the number and complexity of the subsequent formal inquiries, and will get some of the difficult cases adjusted by common consent. Up to the present, the Commission's positive proposals have not advanced beyond the stage of interim measures designed mainly to facilitate planning in the immediate future. The major issues of local government reorganization have been deliberately left over until the Commission has gained further knowledge, based on wider discussion and investigation, of what needs to be done. The consequence of this is, of course, that over a large part of the country there is still no satisfactory basis for long-term planning. It is still an unsettled question whether towns which set out to disperse a part of their populations over fairly wide surrounding areas must reconcile themselves, as the London County Council has had to do in the past, to losing the dispersed citizens to other local government authorities, or can hope to retain them as members of an enlarged "town-and-country" community, with or without lesser centres of local administration inside its enlarged frontiers. The Commission, however, holds out in its first Report the prospect that it will be directing its attention to such major issues as this by the latter part of this year (1947), and will have something fairly definite to say about them in its next Report.

It may be convenient at this stage to quote a few of the more significant figures cited in the Commission's Report for 1946. The populations of the 83 existing County Boroughs range from over a million to fewer than 24,000. Thirty-seven of them have populations of less than 100,000, whereas six exceed 300,000. Rateable value ranges from £7,500,000 to

## PREFACE

£200,000, and the product of a penny rate from £29,000 to under £1,000. The 309 Non-County Boroughs show similarly wide differences—in population from nearly 180,000 to under 1,000, and in rateable value from nearly £2,000,000 to £3,000. The product of a penny rate ranges from £7,600 to £12. Urban Districts vary in population from over 200,000 to 700, and show equally wide differences in rateable value and product. Rural Districts have populations ranging from 80,000 to 1,000; but here the differences in rateable value and product are not quite so wide.

These immense discrepancies of course indicate that the names County Borough, Non-County Borough, Urban District, and Rural District, though they are precise in designating legal status, do not in fact designate areas which are similar in any other respect. An Urban District may be a real town, large or small; or it may be simply a bit of a large town lying outside the municipal frontier, or an urbanized village which has become a suburb. Much the same may be said of many Non-County Boroughs; and even among County Boroughs some are the major parts of big cities, whereas others are less than half the conurbations of which they form the centres, and yet others have come to be no more than immense suburbs or satellites of still larger neighbours. Rural Districts, despite much tidying since 1929, are inevitably in many places simply what is left after the urban areas have been carved out. As for Parishes—but there is no sign in the Boundary Commission's first Report that it has even heard of Parishes, or thinks of them as presenting any problem needing to be solved.

So far, as I have indicated, the Commission's positive proposals have been limited for the most part to allowing certain County Boroughs, which urgently need a basis for post-war planning, to annex limited areas beyond their present frontiers, with a view to re-housing some of their candidates for "dispersal" in their newly-acquired territories. For example, St. Helens is being allowed to include a large part of the parish of Windle, in the Whiston Rural District; and Oldham is being allowed to absorb Lees Urban District and part of the Limehurst Rural District. On the other hand, the applications from a number of Greater London Boroughs in Essex to become County Boroughs have been adjourned pending consideration of the problems of other areas with

## PREFACE

which their fortunes are clearly intertwined; and there has been a similar postponement of decisions in the case of the Black Country area to the west and north of Birmingham. Plymouth has been allowed substantial extensions needed in connection with its re-building plans; but no decision has been reached upon its wider claims. In effect, it has been left unsettled whether any town which sets out to re-house a part of its population, not by extending its continuous, or nearly continuous, built-up area, but at some distance in satellite towns or country suburbs, is to keep or lose these citizens. I am not suggesting that the problem here posed admits of a single, simple answer which can be applied to all areas: what I am saying is that the Commission has so far carefully refrained from even adumbrating any answer at all, while indicating that it does mean to attempt an answer in the very near future.

This book is an attempt to influence the Boundary Commission in formulating its answer; and it is even more an attempt to influence public opinion in the reception of whatever plans or proposals the Commission may advance. It will be most unfortunate if the future structure of Local and Regional Government in this country is decided without the major part of the population taking any direct or instructed interest in the question; for, unless the public is keenly interested, the decision will inevitably be made to suit the views and prejudices of local Councillors and officials rather than to meet the needs of democracy. The effective working of democratic institutions on a national scale is impossible unless these institutions rest on a firm foundation of local democracy. Officials, however, and to a large extent elected Councillors as well, are all too apt to conceive of the problem primarily in terms, not of popular self-government, but of administrative efficiency as seen from the administrator's angle of vision. Such efficiency is, of course, highly important; but the aim should be, not to give it primacy over democracy, but to reconcile it with democracy and to make Local Government, much more than it is to-day or can be with its present structure, interesting and near to the ordinary citizens, both women and men.

This cannot be done at all if hugeness is allowed to prevail over neighbourhood. There is a place for large-scale adminis-

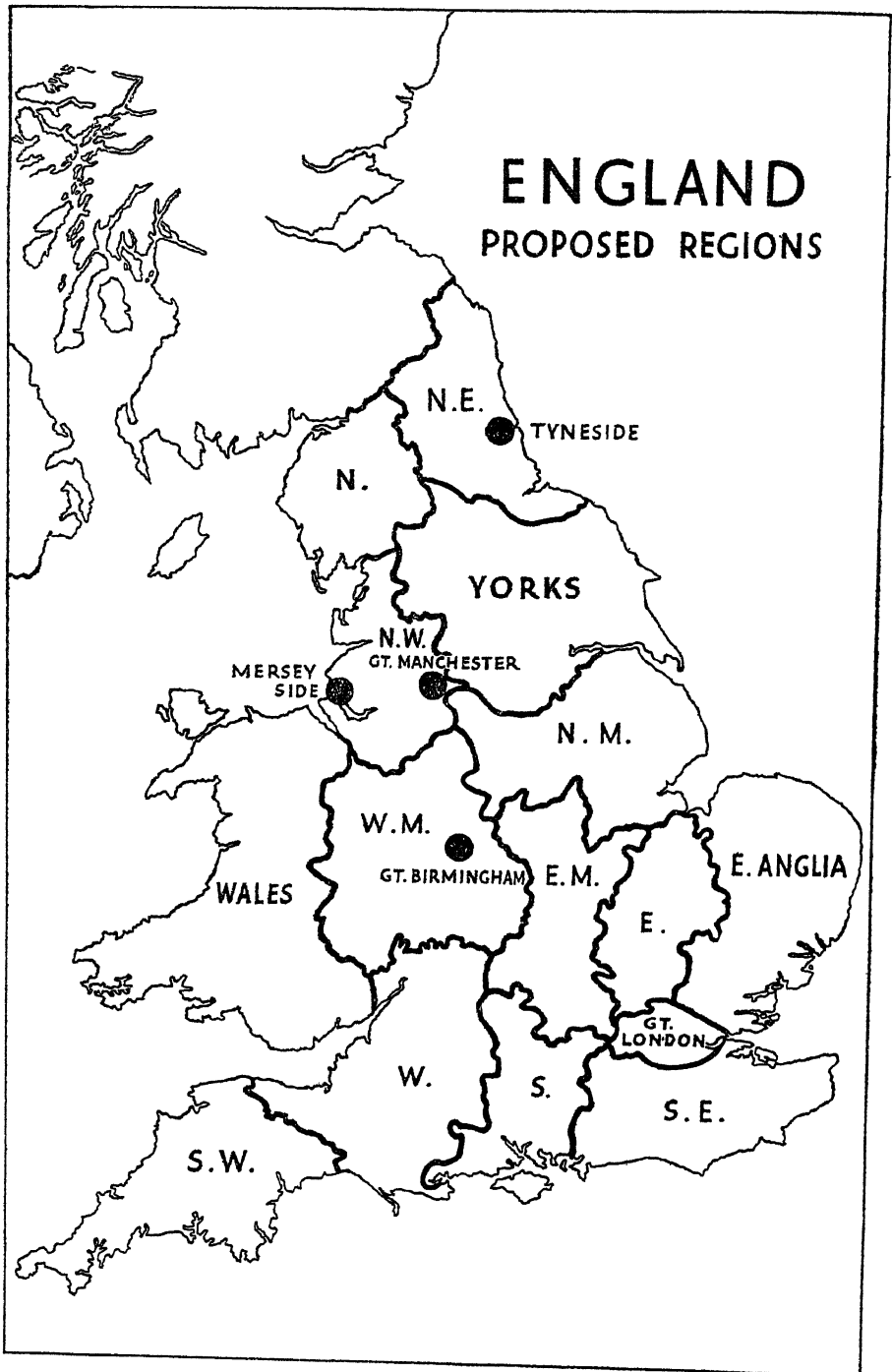
## PREFACE

tration—for larger administrations than exist over most of the country to-day—and for realistic reorganization of the large units in which people do actually move and have their being. But the bigger local governments have to become *for some purposes*, the greater is the need for preserving and for re-creating really small-scale agencies for other purposes closely related to the everyday lives of the people. I wish I could see more signs, in the Boundary Commission's first Report, that it is keeping its eye firmly on this second necessity of democracy, and is proposing, in asking Parliament to deal with the whole problem on comprehensive lines, to get public opinion behind it in the great battle with prejudice and vested interest that any worthwhile plan of reform will certainly provoke.

HENDON,  
July, 1947.

# ENGLAND

## PROPOSED REGIONS



## INTRODUCTORY

THE existing system of Local Government in England and Wales is of fairly recent growth. It is based mainly on six distinct types of authority—the Administrative County, the County Borough, the Non-county Borough, the Urban District, the Rural District, and the Parish. Of the authorities responsible for the government of these six, the first and second date, in their present form, from 1888; the third from 1835, subject to modifications made in 1882; the fourth and fifth and sixth from 1894. Counties, Boroughs and Parishes are of course much older than this. The County is a very ancient area of judicial and administrative authority: the Borough descends from the chartered Municipal Corporation of the middle ages; and the Parish, an ancient ecclesiastical unit, has been a civil unit as the area of Poor Law chargeability since the reign of Elizabeth. There were, however, no elected County Councils until 1888, and no Parish Councils, in the present form, till 1894; and the existing division of Boroughs into County and Non-County, with widely differing powers, began only in 1888. Urban District Councils date, in effect, from the Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875, but assumed their present form only in 1894. Finally, Rural District Councils grew out of the Unions of Parishes created for the administration of the New Poor Law of 1834, but came into separate existence only in 1894.

This summary omits London, where the London County Council was set up in 1889, as successor to the indirectly elected Metropolitan Board of Works, established exclusively for main drainage in 1855. The Metropolitan Borough Councils are still more recent, having been set up only in 1899.

In effect the idea that there should be, over the whole country, a network of elected Councils responsible to the local residents for the conduct of the local administration, under

powers conferred by the national Parliament, is less than sixty years old. Up to 1888, it is broadly true that Local Government, or rather Local Self-government, was a special privilege, conferred on certain places where there were large concentrations of inhabitants. It was an urban privilege, based on the ancient success of towns in extracting Royal Charters from the Crown, and not a recognized right of citizenship, even for the well-to-do. The Counties, to the extent to which they can be said to have had any Local Government at all, were until 1888 under the jurisdiction of the county magistrates, whose control was in form judicial rather than administrative. The magistrates could order the parish authorities to carry out duties which had been laid upon them by statute or were held to fall upon them under the common law (mainly for the prevention of 'nuisances'); but the County had in effect no administrative apparatus of its own, and the county J.P.s were not at all like a modern County Council, in their functions and methods of working any more than in their composition. It is true that the J.P.s, though they were appointed by the Crown, stood for local interests and were jealous of any encroachment by the Central Government; but it is also true that, save quite exceptionally, the Central Government felt no desire to encroach. It had been an essential part of the revolutionary settlement of 1689 that the government of the country should be left to the country gentlemen. These gentlemen, however, conceived of their task essentially in judicial and supervisory, and hardly at all in administrative terms. There were no county services for them to administer, except the punishment or admonition of offenders against the law. Quarter Sessions was not a non-elected sort of County Council: it was a court of law.

As for the towns, or rather those which possessed Charters as Municipal Corporations, they could do in effect as much, or as little, Local Government as they pleased; and it pleased many of them to do very little. It is a most remarkable fact that where, in the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the growth of town populations made it necessary to provide for a certain minimum of common services, such as lighting and watching the streets, removing house refuse, supplying water, and generally 'improving' the towns, these duties were undertaken only sometimes by the

ancient chartered Corporations, and were quite often assigned, on the petition of leading inhabitants, to new *ad hoc* bodies of Commissioners. This was the normal way of setting about the provision of such services in the numerous newer towns which had no ancient corporate status—and these included such rapidly developing cities as Manchester and Birmingham. In some cases, such as Manchester, towns remained under the partial control of ancient manorial courts presided over by the representative of the Lord of the Manor; and manorial courts and newer bodies of Commissioners, set up by Act of Parliament, existed side by side and engaged in acrimonious disputes about the scope and limits of their several jurisdictions. The great Reform Act of 1832 reformed the Boroughs as parliamentary constituencies, but left their position in Local Government untouched. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 altered their constitutions and provided them with an electorate based on a uniform householder qualification, but did nothing to re-define or extend their functions, though it did make possible for them the buying out of ancient manorial rights and the taking over, where they thought fit and agreement could be reached, of the powers and duties of *ad hoc* bodies of Commissioners operating within the municipal boundaries. Most important of all, the Act of 1835 facilitated the establishment of new Municipal Corporations under Charter; and gradually most of the new towns of the Industrial Revolution became Boroughs and superseded the Improvement Commissions and other more specialized bodies, and, presently, began to take to themselves new corporate functions under the Acts providing for the establishment of police forces and for the development of health services under the Public Health Act of 1848. Under this Act, a Municipal Corporation was allowed to become the Local Board of Health for its area; and from this time onwards the sanitary side of municipal government began to involve regular administrative duties, though no general system of urban sanitary administration was brought into being until the great Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875.

Thus even urban self-government was a thing of very gradual growth; and its development was to some extent held back by the disjunction between the Poor Law and other localized public services. The New Poor Law of 1834

set up a totally new administrative mechanism for what was at that time by far the most expensive and also the most universal public service. Up to 1834 the Poor Law, which dated from the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and had undergone no fundamental change since the beginning of the seventeenth century, was in the hands of the parishes, which administered it through unpaid officers sometimes aided by paid assistant 'overseers of the poor'. The only exceptions to this rule of parish management were the areas controlled by Incorporated Boards of Guardians, for 'Unions' of Parishes, set up under Gilbert's Act of 1782; and the setting up of such bodies was entirely optional, nor did they cover more than a small part of the country. In respect of area, the Gilbert's Act 'Union' furnished the model for the comprehensive changes of 1834; but there was a vital difference between the old 'Incorporated' Unions and their Guardians and the new Unions of Parishes and the new Boards of Guardians established under the Act of 1834. The old 'Unions', formed each under its own special code of rules, had been bodies as independent of the Central Government as the Parishes, and in practice had been more independent than the ununified Parishes of control by the County J.P.s, who had general supervisory functions. The Boards of Guardians set up for the new Unions of 1834, on the other hand, were not independent bodies at all, but mere local executants of policies laid down for them from the centre by the new Board of Poor Law Commissioners—popularly known as 'The Three Bashaws of Somerset House'. The new Poor Law of 1834 was the first attempt to establish a form of elected local administration definitely subject to a central agency; and this central agency was given the form not of a civil service department in the ordinary sense, but of a body of independent Commissioners, who were left free, within the very wide discretion allowed by the Act, to determine their own policy and to enforce that policy upon the local Boards subjected to their control.

This was an immense departure from tradition, which decreed the independence of local public agencies and regarded any control over them, except in the form of actual parliamentary legislation defining their powers, as a dangerous encroachment of bureaucracy. It was accepted, though not without protest, because the politicians, Whigs and Tories

alike, were for the most part convinced of the need for a drastic surgical operation designed to reduce the burden of the poor rates and to prevent the labourers in town or country from being able to live on poor relief as an alternative to working for wages, however low—and still more to stop the subsidization of wages, especially in the Southern and Eastern counties, under the Speenhamland system. This system of allowances in aid of wages, based on minimum family needs, had been started as a means of dealing with the conditions created by wartime scarcity in 1795, but had lasted on not merely through the rest of the long war but into the peace and throughout the troublous years between 1815 and 1834. The parliamentary leaders of both parties, and the bulk of upper- and middle-class people everywhere, were convinced that only a drastic reform would abolish this system of 'pauperization', and that no such reform would ever be brought about by local bodies, however chosen, on their own initiative. The principles of 'deterrence' and 'less eligibility' proclaimed by the poor law reformers could be enforced, it was believed, only by a central body, removed from local influence and armed with the full authority of the State. Many who were in principle strongly hostile to any central interference in the management of local affairs supported the New Poor Law, centralized administrative machinery and all, on this ground. They wanted to see the local poor rates brought down; and this consideration overbore their strong preconception against central bureaucracy and against any real supervision by the Central Government of the administration of local affairs.

If, however, a strong centralized poor law system had to be accepted in the interests of national economy and the establishment of a 'free labour market', the new poor law machinery had evidently to be set up in such a way as to interfere not at all with the independence of Local Government in other respects. Accordingly, the new Boards of Guardians were established, in town and country alike, with no organic connection with other Local Government agencies. They were entirely independent of, and apart from, the Municipal Corporations and other bodies responsible for urban Local Government; and outside the towns they had no connection with the jurisdiction exercised by the county magistrates.

From 1834 onwards England and Wales had two co-existing systems of Local Government—the one based on the principle of the fullest local autonomy within general powers conceded by charter or by statute, and the other resting on the conflicting principle of strong, centralized control.

The Public Health Act of 1848, which Parliament was induced to pass under the impulsion of fears engendered by the repeated epidemics of cholera, was an attempt, under the influence of Edwin Chadwick, who had been a principal inspirer of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, to extend the principle of centralized control from the administration of poor relief to the vital service of Public Health. This attempt, however, met with defeat. Parliament, still inspired by dislike of bureaucracy and belief in local independence, refused, when its immediate fears had lessened, to renew the powers of the National Board of Health, which had been established in 1848 on the model of the Poor Law Board. The Local Boards of Health set up under its auspices, and the functions assumed by Municipal Corporations as Local Boards of Health, survived; but the central control was removed, and each local body was left to develop, or not to develop, a public health policy of its own. Even when, in 1872 and 1875, the Public Health Acts were greatly strengthened, and every urban area was equipped with an urban sanitary authority of its own—the Municipal Corporation in each corporate town, and a special, *ad hoc* body elsewhere—the powers conceded were mainly permissive, and the newly established Local Government Board (1871) was given no control over local health services of at all the same character as it exercised over the local Board of Guardians as successor to the Poor Law Board, whose functions it absorbed.

Thus, English Local Government, as it grew up in the critical period after the Reform Act of 1832, was based on a remarkable dualism. On the one side were the Municipal Corporations and the county magistrates in Quarter Sessions, enjoying almost complete independence of any central control; and on the other side were the Boards of Guardians, strictly controlled in matters of policy from the centre. To a certain extent, the new urban sanitary authorities set up in the 1870's occupied an intermediate position. They were not corporate bodies, and they were brought within the sphere of operation

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of the Local Government Board, which inherited a strong centralizing tendency. But as no grants were paid from the centre in aid of public health services, the Local Government Board, lacking the strong statutory authority which had been given to it in respect of the Poor Law, was not able to exercise any substantial control over their doings, and for some time after their establishment they were left to do, or not to do, pretty much as they pleased, as long as they did not exceed their permissive statutory powers. There was in effect a maximum beyond which they could not go, but only the barest minimum that they were required to reach.

At this stage, the only locally administered service for which the Central Government accepted any share of financial responsibility was that of police, which had been gradually organized between 1829, when Peel started the Metropolitan Police under the direct control of the Home Office, and 1856, when police forces were at last made compulsory in all areas—in the Boroughs under powers conferred by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, and in the rest of the country under powers given to the County Justices by Acts of 1839 and 1840. The preservation of order, especially during the period of Chartist disturbance in the 'Hungry Forties', had come to be regarded as in part a responsibility of the Central Government; and it was desired to use the armed forces of the Crown as little as possible for this purpose except in special emergencies. Accordingly, the State took a hand in getting effective police forces brought into existence throughout the country; but the feeling against central interference was too strong to allow any extension outside London of the legislation which had made the Metropolitan Police (the 'Peelers') directly subject to the Home Office. Even this would hardly have been tolerated had London possessed any common local government of its own; but outside the City of London, which was allowed to have its quite separate police force under the City Corporation, there was no body to which any share in the control of the Metropolitan Police, who had to operate over the whole town, could be entrusted. London was therefore in an exceptional position; and elsewhere the Central Government was able to claim no more than a small part in the control of locally administered forces of police, each with its own limited range of jurisdiction.

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Such was the position when, in 1888, it was felt necessary to follow up the Reform Act of 1884, which had enfranchised the bulk of the male population outside the corporate towns, by the extension of some form of elective self-government in local matters to the county areas. The outcome was the County Councils Act of 1888, which did away with the ancient quasi-judicial powers of the Justices of the Peace in county administration—powers which had been steadily growing in their hands as the economic development of Great Britain enforced the institution of new collective services—and put in its place the administrative authority of elected County Councils chosen on the basis of a fairly wide franchise—broadly corresponding to the new parliamentary franchise of 1884.

The setting up of the County Councils made it necessary to face afresh the general problem of urban government. Were the County Councils to have any jurisdiction within the areas of the corporate towns situated within the geographical frontiers of the ancient counties? To answer Yes to this question would have aroused the fierce opposition of the Municipal Corporations of the bigger towns, which had hitherto been to all intents and purposes completely self-governing except in poor law matters, over which they had no control, and in educational matters, which had been entrusted in 1870 and 1876 to separately elected School Boards and School Attendance Committees. The big towns would have fought tooth and nail any attempt to subject them in any respect to the new and untried County Councils, on which the landed interest was certain to occupy a large and influential place. On the other hand, to deny the County Councils all jurisdiction within the corporate towns and all power to levy local rates upon their inhabitants would have involved leaving them with an impossible residue of territory to govern and with almost no funds for use in developing any effective common services. To some extent at any rate, the towns had to be made both to contribute towards the costs of county administration and to stiffen the elected County Councils with persons who had some experience in administrative tasks and some consciousness of Local Government in their electorates.

The solution was a compromise. The larger towns were made into County Boroughs, with complete control over all

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their own local services except the Poor Laws and education; whereas the smaller towns, as 'municipal' or 'non-county' Boroughs, were left within the new Administrative Counties, in such a way that the County Councils became responsible for the administration of certain services within their areas, as well as in the rest of the county whereas other services—the majority—were left in the hands of the Municipal Corporations. It should be observed that in respect of the services left to the non-county Boroughs the County Councils were given no supervisory powers. Each type of body was autonomous in respect of the functions assigned to it. The County Councils did, however, get the power to levy a 'county rate' on the inhabitants of the non-county Boroughs, side by side with the 'borough rate' which each Borough levied for its own purposes. Within the areas of the County Boroughs the County Councils got no such power. The County Boroughs became in effect 'Administrative Counties', existing side by side with the 'Administrative Counties' placed under the new County Councils, and entirely separate from them in all respects.

This curious compromise solution had certain unavoidable defects which came to light only gradually. It was inevitable that the County Councils, as they became more conscious of themselves and as the range and cost of the services which they provided increased, should offer increasing resistance both to the creation of new County Boroughs and to any extension of the areas of County Boroughs already in being. Every such new creation or extension threatened the County Councils affected with the loss of a part of their rateable value, and usually with the loss of relatively wealthy areas, whose inhabitants contributed towards the cost of services in the poorer rural parts of the counties—or at all events in the areas from which it was most difficult to raise substantial sums in local rates.

Thus there developed a system under which, in the big towns, all the growing services of Local Government, except those connected with the Poor Laws and education, were in the hands of a single Local Authority, whereas in the smaller towns and in the rural areas responsibility was divided. This distinction was carried further by the Local Government Act of 1894, which set up Rural District Councils for all

areas not covered by Municipal Corporations or included in Urban Sanitary Districts. These latter, dropping the word 'sanitary', were converted into Urban Districts, with general powers inferior, but analogous, to those of non-county Boroughs. Under the same Act, parishes were given a new status and were allowed, but not compelled, to set up elected Parish Councils, while, in parishes where no Councils were set up, Parish Meetings were entrusted with largely similar powers. The powers conferred on the parishes were not great, and were in most areas sparingly used; but the total effect was that in every rural area there were, after 1894, three distinct Local Authorities, in addition to the Board of Guardians and the School Board. In every urban area that was not a County Borough there were two Local Authorities, and in every County Borough only one, apart from the special bodies in charge of the Poor Laws and of education. In London, the City Corporation was the sole general authority; whereas in the rest of London, as it was then defined, there were everywhere at least two authorities—for the area of London County was a network of smaller Local Authorities holding powers independent of the London County Council before, as well as after, the establishment of the Metropolitan Borough Councils in 1899.

In 1902, the Education Act made a step towards consolidation by abolishing the separately elected School Boards and handing their powers over to the County Councils and County Borough Councils, and to the larger non-County Borough Councils, which were allowed to retain an independent educational jurisdiction for elementary, but not for higher or for technical education. Finally, in 1929—twenty years after the change had been recommended by the Poor Laws Royal Commission of 1909—the Boards of Guardians were abolished and their powers also transferred to the general authorities—in this case to the County and County Borough Councils only, with no concessions to the claims of the non-county Boroughs.

This process of development, over a period of a hundred years, constituted a victory for the 'general purposes' type over the '*ad hoc*' type of Local Authority. In the County Boroughs, it left a single locally elected authority in charge of every locally administered service: in the rest of the country

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it left powers divided in each area between two or more separate authorities, each with its own defined functions, in some cases clearly distinct from those of the other bodies operating within its area, but in other cases overlapping, so that a particular service might be undertaken by either the major or the minor authority, or by two or more authorities, all acting independently under their own powers as laid down by statute.

There was always some room, within this system, for re-definition of local boundaries and for the promotion of a particular Local Authority to a higher status. New Urban Districts were created from time to time; existing Urban Districts were promoted to the status of non-county Boroughs; new County Boroughs were carved out of the Administrative Counties; and the areas of both County and non-county Boroughs and of Urban Districts were extended. The Rural Districts were re-shaped here and there; and new Parish Councils were set up where the demand for them was made. There was, however, always strong opposition on the part of the County Councils to the establishment or extension of County Boroughs; and, as towns grew, their new suburbs often became independent Urban Districts, or even non-county Boroughs, instead of being included within the municipal limits of the towns out of which they had developed. The suburban inhabitants often preferred this, because the local rates demanded by the new urban areas, *plus* their contributions to the county rates, were in most cases less than they would have had to pay if they had been included in the larger towns, and had been forced to pay their share of the cost of the common services provided for the town as a whole. This situation arose because in most cases the persons who moved out into the suburbs were better-off than most of those who remained in the older parts of the towns. Their removal left the burden of supporting the local services to be borne mainly by the poorer householders and by the shopkeepers and other providers of services which had to be located centrally—a state of affairs which was seriously aggravated by the de-rating measure of 1929.

Probably no one realized in 1888, when the County Boroughs were allowed to become entirely independent of the rest, of the geographical counties in which they were placed,

how momentous a decision was being made. In relation to the locally administered services which existed in 1888, the areas of the County Boroughs and of the Administrative Counties from which they were excluded appeared entirely adequate; and it was hardly appreciated how powerful an obstacle was being put in the way of the extension of County Borough areas in correspondence with the actual growth of the larger towns. Nobody, or almost nobody, was then thinking in terms of the possible development of local services which would call for unified administration or regional co-ordination over areas considerably larger than those of the new Administrative Counties and County Boroughs; and a compromise which got the County Councils into being with adequate financial resources behind them without raising the opposition of the bigger urban authorities seemed to politicians an eminently satisfactory way out of an intensely difficult situation.

It is, however, abundantly clear to-day that the Act of 1888 had highly unfortunate consequences. It created a structure which, though flexible in theory, was in practice unduly rigid, and quite extraordinarily resistant to major changes, however desirable these might come to be in the light of alterations in the distribution of population, in the scope of locally administered services, and in the technical conditions of administrative efficiency. The general structure of English Local Government became frozen into a shape corresponding, perhaps, tolerably enough to the immediate requirements of the later nineteenth century, but destined to get more and more out of relation both to technical requirements and to developing conceptions of local public service.

The inconvenience of the solution adopted in 1888 became plain first in connection with the technical requirements of efficient service. The 1880's and 1890's were the epoch of advancing 'Municipal Socialism'—or 'Gas and Water Socialism', as it was sometimes called. Largely under the inspiration of Joseph Chamberlain and his school of Birmingham municipal reformers, reinforced in the 1880's by the Fabian Society under the leadership of Sidney Webb, the more active and progressive local Councils set out to municipalize, or to establish under municipal control, such services as the supply of gas and water. These had been

developed at an earlier stage largely by joint stock companies, though a good many of the towns had either provided their own water supplies from the first, or had acquired the undertakings from the companies which had started them—a transition accomplished without undue difficulty because no one thought of describing such acquisition as ‘socialistic’. With the advent of electricity as a source of lighting, and later of power, there developed a hot contest between private and municipal enterprise, with the Fabian Society taking a leading part in the advocacy of municipal ownership; and the majority of the larger cities set up their own electrical undertakings. Before long it began to be evident that most local government areas were too small for the fully efficient generation of their own electricity; and similar problems made their appearance in the field of transport, first in the case of trams and later, and on a larger scale, with the development of the motor bus. The Fabians took the lead in urging the creation of larger units of Local Government corresponding to the requirements of technical efficiency, especially in the sphere of municipal trading, though the need for larger units was felt also in other spheres, such as higher education and public health.

The difficulties, both in relation to municipal trading services and elsewhere, were only in part a matter of scale. There was the further fact that the existing areas of Local Government, apart from considerations of size, often failed to correspond to the real groupings of the population. As towns grew, expansion took place not only into surrounding belts of open country, but also in such a way as to include existing smaller towns and villages within the single built-up area of a bigger town. In some cases, the entire space between two or more major centres of population was filled up by suburban growth. This happened especially in South Lancashire and in parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and also round Newcastle on the North-East Coast. The effect of all these forms of urban sprawl, where they were not accompanied by corresponding extensions of city boundaries or by amalgamations of neighbouring towns, was to divorce the natural areas of service for public utilities, as well as for many kinds of non-trading local government provision, from the recognized areas of Local Government. Before long, this divorce became

a powerful obstacle to the growth of 'Municipal Socialism' in the forms in which it had been advocated in the 1880's and 1890's; and the impetus towards public development of trading services was much weakened by the impracticability of combining it with satisfactory areas of supply. Theoretically, it was possible for a number of neighbouring Local Authorities to come together and constitute a joint board or committee for the operation of any particular service over their combined area. But in practice it was very difficult to persuade Local Authorities to surrender their independence of action to such joint bodies, especially in face of the objections to municipal enterprise which were advanced more and more strongly as it came to be regarded as 'socialistic', and was therefore opposed on political as well as on other grounds.

Joint Boards were nevertheless set up in a number of cases, especially for the supply of water, where the technical conditions were such as in many areas to make combined action indispensable. The Metropolitan Water Board, formed in 1902 to take over a number of separate undertakings, some publicly and some privately owned, is the outstanding example; and there are other instances of effective joint action for water supply in South Lancashire and in the East Midlands. In general, however, the reluctance of Local Authorities to surrender full executive powers to joint bodies was very marked: such surrender was even attacked as 'undemocratic', on the ground that in practice it removed control of the services in question out of the hands of the local electors. Yet without full executive powers the joint bodies could not possibly be successful in running actual services which required efficient business management, including both the determination of policy and its execution in detail.

The unsuitability of many local government areas for the efficient conduct of large-scale trading enterprise was of course a very welcome fact to the opponents of 'Municipal Socialism', and became a factor in strengthening the opposition to the creation of larger units of Local Government and to all proposals for any sort of Regionalism. The Fabian Society, in 1905, put forward its proposals for a 'New Heptarchy'—that is, for the establishment in England of a small number of large Provinces, or Regions, each with its elected Council, to acquire and manage essential public utility services on a

unified regional scale. But this proposal, although it was much discussed, made no headway in political quarters up to 1914. Towards the end of the first World War, however, the Ministry of Reconstruction had under consideration the entire problem of the structure of British government, both central and local; and various plans for regional re-organization were put forward and discussed by a committee of the Ministry. Out of these discussions emerged the first detailed plans for Regionalism, including Professor C. B. Fawcett's well-known plan, later embodied in his book, *The Provinces of England* (1919). I too was then among the prophets and advanced a plan of my own in my book, *The Future of Local Government* (1921); and yet another plan, drawn up in the Ministry of Health in 1920, mainly for housing purposes, became the basis for a certain amount of decentralization of the work of the Central Government during the period of reconstruction. Nothing, however, came of the projects for the establishment of any form of Regionalism in Local Government. It was evident that any proposal of the sort would arouse strong opposition from many of the Local Authorities; and as the matter was one on which no party was united, politicians felt strong objections to going on with it. There seemed to be every prospect that any Government which took up the question would get out of it more kicks than *kudos*; and the Governments which held office during the post-war years were not at all disposed to take any action that might facilitate the growth of 'Municipal Socialism'. Accordingly, the whole matter was shelved.

The only major change in the structure of English Local Government between the wars was the abolition of the separately elected Boards of Guardians and the transference of poor law functions to the general purpose Local Authorities of the Counties and County Boroughs. There were, however, besides this major consolidation a number of important secondary changes. A good many Urban Districts, especially in Greater London, were given the status of non-county Boroughs; and there took place under the auspices of the County Councils a general re-grouping of the Rural Districts, with the effect of considerably reducing their number and making them, for the most part, more easily manageable units. Side by side with these changes went a tendency to

add to the powers of the County Councils and to give them a certain amount of co-ordinating authority over the smaller Councils within their administrative areas. No less significant was the beginning made with town and country planning on a scale greater than that of the single Local Authority. The first Act dealing with town-planning had been passed only in 1909, and had been purely permissive. It had yielded hardly any results up to the outbreak of war in 1914. The second Act, passed in 1919, was the real starting point for planning in urban areas; and one of its most important provisions was that which made possible the formation of Joint Town-Planning Committees representing a number of contiguous Local Authorities. These Committees had in most cases no executive powers, and were able only to draw up master-plans which might or might not be approved and carried into effect by the constituent Local Authorities. Moreover, the planning authorized by legislation was still only *town* planning: it was not extended to the countryside until the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932. Still, a beginning had been made; and, although Local Authorities were in many cases very slow to take action even in preparing plans, and still slower in giving effect to them, at any rate the principle of planned control of land-use was in process of securing nation-wide recognition.

The town-and-country planning authorities under the Acts just mentioned were the County Boroughs, the non-county Boroughs, and the Urban and Rural Districts. County Councils were originally given no place at all; but later it was made possible for them both to co-operate in the work of Joint Town Planning Committees and to exercise directly such planning powers as the lesser authorities within their areas voluntarily transferred into their hands. In practice, in a number of districts, the County Councils began to play a quite important part in collaboration with the lesser authorities; but there was until after the establishment of a separate Ministry of Town and Country Planning in February, 1943, no power to compel any Local Authority which refused to co-operate with its neighbours to come into any joint arrangements even for considering what lines the general planning of a district could best follow. This defect was remedied by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1944,

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when it had become indispensable to have some sort of local co-ordination everywhere for purposes of understanding with the regional planning officers appointed by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning.

Unfortunately, in connection with these developments of local planning, the word 'regions' acquired a technical sense quite different from its current meaning for geographers, local government reformers, and advocates of decentralization of the national government. The word 'region', as used in connection with such projects as the Fabian 'New Heptarchy' of 1905, or Professor Fawcett's scheme of 1919, always meant an area of considerable size and diversity—a great deal more than a single town with its suburbs and environs. The number of Regions into which it was proposed that England should be divided differed considerably from scheme to scheme—from the seven or so of the Fabian 'Heptarchy' to thirty or more. The Ministry of Health draft plan of 1920, using its own nomenclature, provided for fifteen 'Provinces', sub-divided into 59 'Regions'; but even this degree of sub-division allowed for areas of considerable extent and population.

As against this, the word 'regional' came to be applied, in connection with town-planning schemes, to any scheme or body which extended beyond the area of a single Local Authority; and, while there were some Joint Committees, and some plans drawn up, to cover quite wide areas, most of the Joint Town Planning Advisory Committees that were set up covered only small patches of land, usually centring round a single town or sometimes round a natural feature (*e.g.* the New Forest). The word 'regional', as loosely applied to all these bodies, irrespective of the areas covered by them, was, if not positively a misnomer, at any rate very confusing; for it helped to obscure the real meaning of 'Regionalism', as a movement for the setting up of a small number of major authorities, each covering a much larger area than that of any single authority of any of the existing types.

The confusion becomes much worse when, in face of the possibility of invasion in the second World War that began in 1939, the Government decided to divide Great Britain up into a small number of 'Defence Regions', each under a Regional Commissioner, who was to take charge of the entire machinery of central administration in the event of the national machinery

being put out of action, or of communications being interrupted, as a result of war. These Regional Commissioners did not in fact need to assume at all wide powers; for invasion never happened, and bombing at its worst caused no breakdown of machinery or communications. There was, however, in connection with their appointment, a considerable amount of decentralization of the departmental machinery of the Central Government. As far as possible, all the departments which needed any considerable amount of local machinery were made to reorganize their administration on 'regional' lines, corresponding to the areas of the Defence Regions; and Regional Offices of these departments—Food, Labour and National Service, Home Security, etc.—as well as of the wartime Ministries of Production, Supply, and Aircraft Production—were set up in the 'capitals' of the Defence Regions, in close touch with the Regional Commissioners.

This 'Defence Regionalism' was obviously something entirely different from the Regionalism which had been advocated by local government reformers. It was a measure of decentralization of the administrative machinery of the Central Government, whereas what had been advocated by the reformers was a development of local representative machinery on a larger scale. The Regional Commissioners were officers appointed by the Central Government, and there were no elected or delegated bodies representing their 'Regions' to act with them—much less to give them orders. Equally, the Regional Officers of the various national departments acted under the orders of their own Ministers and central officials, and had no formal association with the Local Authorities. 'Defence Regionalism' had, in effect, nothing to do with the establishment of larger units of Local Government: it was simply a matter of central government administration.

Of course, some government departments, notably the Ministry of Labour, the Unemployment Assistance Board, and the Customs and Excise and Inland Revenue services, were largely decentralized in their operations long before the Defence Regions were established in 1939. What was novel in the wartime structure was, first, the grouping of the Regional Offices of a number of Ministries round a common centre (and therewith the introduction of regional

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machinery by certain Ministries which had previously got on without it), and secondly the potential, but never actual, assumption of general directing authority by the Regional Commissioners.

The Local Authorities were the more concerned with these developments because, in practice, they were called upon to act as the agents of the Central Government for the administration of a number of wartime services, particularly in connection with food control, air raid precautions, and the management of the fire service, evacuation, and communal feeding. In respect of these and other services they had to deal largely, not directly with Whitehall, but with the Regional Commissioners or with the Regional Officers of the departments concerned. Some of them, or at any rate some of their members, developed an acute suspicion that the Government, under cover of meeting war needs, was plotting to impose a new bureaucratic dictatorship over Local Government, not merely for the war period, but as a permanent measure; and these upholders of 'local self-government' began loudly to denounce 'Regionalism' as a manifestation of the bureaucratic and totalitarian spirit.

There is no evidence at all that anyone in the Government, or any leading Civil Servant, had any such sinister design as these critics attributed to them. To the extent to which there did exist at the centre any tendency to advocate measures making against the independence of Local Government, this tendency was directed, not towards the setting up of 'regional' areas under the Central Government, but rather towards the taking of certain services right out of the hands of the Local Authorities and the transferring of them, not to regional, but to national *ad hoc* boards or commissions. This was what occurred when a part of the duties of the Public Assistance Committees under the Poor Laws was transferred to the national Unemployment Assistance Board; and there were some who advocated that water supply, gas supply, electricity supply, and local transport should be similarly taken away from the Local Authorities and put directly under the control of nationally appointed Public Corporations. The Local Authorities, as many of the leaders realized, had in truth nothing to fear from the Regional Commissioners, whom the Central Government was anxious to dispense with as soon as

it could. But the effect of the fears aroused by their appointment was to generate a widespread misunderstanding of Regionalism and of its objectives, and therewith a good deal of irrational prejudice against it.

The Regional Commissioners had in fact become largely inactive well before the end of the war, and the entire system was speedily liquidated when the war was over. Departmental 'regionalism', however, remained in being to a considerable extent, and was reinforced by the setting up of Regional Offices of the Board of Trade to take a hand in the re-conversion of industry to a peace-time structure and in the planning of the location of industry under the limited powers conferred by the Distribution of Industry Act of 1945. Some degree of Central Government decentralization greater than existed in 1939 has evidently come to stay: it is in fact a necessary consequence of the greater State control over industry, and of the acceptance of government responsibility for 'full employment' and for some measure of national economic planning.

In this chapter I have attempted no more than a very brief review of a part of the historical environment in which the contemporary problems of English Local Government have to be studied. Like most English institutions, Local Government has grown up piecemeal and unplanned. It has been adapted and developed to meet changing needs and conditions; but it has never been reorganized as a single whole, nor have the mutual relations of its parts or its relation to Central Government ever been comprehensively surveyed or thought out. What has happened has been, in effect, that, just as the House of Commons has been gradually converted from an essentially aristocratic assembly into an organ of popular government, so Local Government has been democratized bit by bit, not only by extensions of the local government franchise, but also by the building up of new institutions covering the entire country and modelled on those set up in the first instance for the management of the collective affairs of corporate towns. The prototype of modern Local Government, if we except the rudimentary organ of the Parish Meeting, is the Municipal Corporation; and the best clue to its development is to be found in the study of the evolution of this particular institution.

The Municipal Corporation, by and large, begins as the organ of an urban aristocracy of merchants and master-

craftsmen seeking not so much self-government as immunity from the unlimited and unpredictable exactions of feudal overlords and of the Crown. These merchants and craftsmen wanted to administer their own justice, in order to be sure of getting a justice that would meet their mercantile needs; they wanted charters of rights to exempt them from the control of the great landowners who lorded it over the countryside, and also to introduce certainty into their relations with the King as the representative of the national State. They wanted to collect their own taxes, in order to escape the rapacity of tax-farmers; and they wanted, though at first less than these other things, the power to organize their own towns as residential as well as commercial and industrial centres. Whether these separate Gilds of merchants and master-craftsmen played, as such, a large or a small part in the structure and working of the Municipal Corporations did not greatly matter; for whether their direct part was large or small, the Gild masters formed in fact the dominant aristocracy, and conducted the affairs of the Corporations to suit their common needs and convenience.

With the decay of the Gilds, the old basis of these municipal bodies was knocked away. They continued to be aristocracies, or at any rate oligarchies, and to represent primarily the local notables of industry and trade. Where ancient towns, instead of growing with the centuries, fell into decay, as many did, and came to have little or no local trade or industry to protect, the Municipal Corporations decayed with the towns, and degenerated in many cases into self-co-opting cabals whose chief activities were feasting at the charge of the income from the corporate property and disposing to their own pecuniary advantage of the seats in the House of Commons to which they retained the right to elect members. Some of them fell under the control of landowners, who by virtue of their ownership of the local house-property nominated whom they pleased to serve on the Corporations and, through them, controlled the parliamentary representation. Where the towns grew in population and in economic importance, the history of their Municipal Corporations was somewhat different; and some of them, such as Liverpool, played a leading part in the development of their towns. But in practically every case, whether the Corporations were active or lethargic,

public-spirited or personally rapacious, the essential characteristic of the municipal bodies by the eighteenth century was that they were controlled by a small number of leading citizens, mostly Churchmen but reinforced by a few moderate Dissenters who were prepared to accept the condition of 'occasional conformity' so as to comply with the Test and Corporation Acts.

The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 tidied up these mostly corrupt or at least irresponsible oligarchies and equipped them with new constitutions providing for representative government. It made them open to Dissenters equally with Churchmen, and gave them a new start on the basis of a franchise not very different from that of the Reformed Parliament itself. It also made possible the widespread creation of new Municipal Corporations, conforming to the reformed type; and the City or Town Council of the Victorian era developed as an essentially middle-class institution, in which power rested with a local aristocracy of manufacturers and tradesmen, but these 'aristocrats' of the new town communities ruled not irresponsibly, as the eighteenth-century Corporations had done, but as the responsible representatives of the 'respectable' citizens—a category from which contemporary opinion excluded all except the topmost layer of the wage-earning inhabitants. Under the new control, municipal government became for the most part tolerably honest, and even public-spirited according to the lights of the classes that held sway. The old, corrupt Corporations had been spend-thrifts: the new bourgeois Corporations were inclined to the most rigid economy in the use of public funds. Instead of feathering their own nests, the Councillors took pride in keeping down the rates; and, with this end in view, they adopted an exceedingly narrow view of the functions of Local Government, and looked askance at proposals for new or improved public services that seemed likely to involve any increase in local taxation. They did not necessarily object to 'municipal enterprise', in such matters as the supply of water. But they wanted to be able to run such services at a profit, which could be applied to rate-reduction, or at any rate without loss; and they did not like being called upon to supply sanitary or other services which could not be put on a basis of direct payment by the users.

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Except that the basis of the municipal electorate was gradually broadened, this type of Municipal Corporation remained practically unchanged until, in the 1870's, Joseph Chamberlain launched his Radical movement for the improvement and extension of municipal services. There was a general awakening of popular interest in local government affairs. The Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875 were followed by a great improvement in the quality of local sanitary services: a beginning was made with slum clearance and municipal control of housing, albeit on a small scale, under the Cross and Torrens Housing Acts; and the local Councils played their part in the campaign against the adulteration of food by noxious admixtures under the powers conferred by the Adulteration Acts of 1836 and 1851. In retrospect, and in comparison with later events, these developments appear both slow and unduly tentative. But they did correspond to a developing recognition of responsibility for good government to a wider section of the people. They were an essential part of the general process of development towards a less undemocratic way of living; and that they went no further than they did was largely the consequence of the still almost unchallenged dominance of a social philosophy which insisted on a very narrow conception of the functions of public enterprise and provision, and on a preconception that most things would be best done if they were left to be done by private individuals acting under the impulsion of the profit motive.

Even when the municipal franchise had been so extended that most of the citizens, women as well as men, had votes, the 'narrow' view of municipal functions died hard—the more so because, as we have seen, 'Municipal Socialism' became more a political issue as Socialism developed its challenge to the older parties in the field of national politics. Nevertheless, the range of municipally administered services grew steadily wider, and this was reflected in rising totals of municipal expenditure out of the rates, and also later in the increasing grants from the National Exchequer.

In the 1840's the total expenditure of Local Authorities in England and Wales, including the poor laws, was only about £8 millions a year: by 1880 it was well over £50 millions, and it doubled again during the next twenty years, and rose in

1913-14 to nearly £170 millions, including about £23 millions of Exchequer grants. Even against the will of most of those who served as Councillors, the Municipal Councils of the closing decades of the nineteenth century—and even more those of the opening decades of the twentieth—were developing into all-in associations of the local citizens for the provision of an essential minimum of common services; and, what is more, the conception of what was essential as a minimum was tending steadily to advance.

Local Government outside the corporate towns, old and new, largely followed the municipal model. The great exception is the Board of Guardians, as established under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. In that case, for the purpose of enforcing the highly unpopular policy of refusing outdoor relief and making the new workhouse 'Bastilles' as deterrent as they could be made to the unhappy 'paupers', the State not only set up a rigidly centralized control of policy, but also arranged for the Guardians to be elected by a cumulative voting system which weighted the elections heavily in favour of the propertied classes—that is, of those who had to pay the poor rates. This highly undemocratic system was justified by those who resorted to it on the ground that those who paid the piper had a right to call the tune; but even so they were not prepared to trust the weighted Boards of Guardians not to behave too generously.

By the time that County Councils and Urban and Rural District Councils were set up in the closing decades of the century, the poor could no longer be treated openly in this fashion. After 1884 the majority of the male wage-earners were parliamentary electors, and could not be denied at any rate a nominal equality with their betters, when they were given any right to vote; and the right itself could not be denied to those who, as householders, even of the poorer sort, were called upon to contribute to the local rates. There was still a struggle over the rights of the 'compounders'—that is, of tenants who paid their landlords a compound rent, inclusive of their share in the rates; but this struggle was bound in the long run to be settled—and was actually settled—in the tenants' favour. County Councils and Urban and Rural District Councils had to conform to the broad character of late nineteenth-century municipal government—though in

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practice, because of the relative political backwardness of their electorates and of the greater difficulties in the way of organizing opinion in scattered rural areas, the County Councils and Rural District Councils, except in the mining centres, remained largely the preserve of a limited class of landowners, farmers, and local gentry.

In a subsequent chapter, we shall have to consider the serious limitations on the democratic working of Local Government, especially in the Counties and Rural Districts, imposed by the narrowness of the social groups from which, in practice, the Councillors have had to be recruited. Expense, difficulties of travel and loss of working time, reluctance of employers to allow time off to their employees, or even to tolerate their presumption in wishing to stand forth as public representatives of their fellows, have, in practice, ruled out large sections of the electorate from the chance of becoming Councillors; and Councils have included an unduly large proportion of elderly and retired persons who have been able to afford the time and cost, and have not been obstructed by their conditions of employment. Subject, however, to these serious limitations, even country government has responded in some measure to the growing democratization of political life as a whole, and it has become natural to think of its essential institutions as constituting broadly local representative forms of government analogous within their smaller areas to the House of Commons as the representative assembly of the entire nation.

Yet it must never be left out of mind that the Local Authorities, however democratically they may be constituted in theory, or even in practice, can act only by virtue of powers conferred upon them by the national Parliament, or that this Parliament, in giving them powers, has usually nowadays to give them money as well, because the local rates which are their main direct source of revenue simply cannot stand the strain of ampler powers without the aid of subventions from national funds. In practice, therefore, the growth of local democracy is inhibited seriously by the national power of the purse; and no great forward steps are possible unless Chancellors of the Exchequer are able and willing to be generous in supplementing local resources by grants-in-aid paid for out of national taxation. In face of the growing tax-burdens of national social services, this condition tends

to become more limiting on the development of local services, except where the State is prepared to accept the Local Authorities as its partners in the conduct of a national scheme. In effect, this type of partnership tends to increase; and as it does so the Local Authorities become to an increasing extent agents of the national Government, as well as autonomous local providers. The relations between National and Local Government become closer and more intricate; and planning becomes a matter of organizing these relations in a more systematic way. It becomes more essential that the Local Authorities and the Central Government should follow a common policy; and therewith it becomes inevitable that the same political conflicts and party policies should appear in both.

## THE MEANING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WHAT do we mean by 'Local Government'? In Great Britain, as matters stand to-day, the answer is sufficiently clear. We mean the complex of elected local authorities, from the Councils of Counties and County Boroughs down to the humble Parish Councils, together with all the administrative machinery attached to them and the various joint boards and committees set up between them, for the management of local affairs. We do not mean the local offices and administrations of departments of the Central Government, even though these are coming to play an increasing part in local administrative work. Nor do we ordinarily think of the Parliament of Northern Ireland as belonging to the sphere of Local Government, even though it is subordinate to the Parliament of the United Kingdom and has jurisdiction over many fewer people than the London County Council.

Thus, on the one hand, we regard it as being of the essence of Local Government that its institutions shall be, in the last resort, under local elective control; and, on the other hand, we exclude from it institutions which are primarily legislative and parliamentary in form, even if their jurisdiction is limited to a fairly small area. Local Government, as we regard it in the United Kingdom, is local self-government in the field primarily of administration, rather than in the legislative field.

This definition would not fit all countries, or all conditions. It is a working definition, meant for practical and limited use, and not a precise or comprehensive definition, resting on a scientific basis. It is, indeed, rather a description of what now exists, in the particular areas with which this book is concerned, than a definition in any strict sense of the term. We may even find it breaking down before we have done with

the matters discussed in this book. Certainly we should find it hard to apply to any federal or confederal State—to the United States or to the Soviet Union, to Canada or to Australia, to Switzerland or to the new Yugoslavia that is in process of taking shape. Even in the case of the United Kingdom, the governmental structure of Northern Ireland does not fit the simple distinction between Central and Local Government; and the Scottish and Welsh structures would not fit either, if the Nationalist Parties of these two national divisions of the United Kingdom were to get their way.

By Local Government, then, we usually mean some form of government that serves only a small area and exercises only delegated powers. Local Governments are not 'sovereign', as are the Governments of independent national States; and in the main they do not pass laws—they administer laws passed by some higher authority with powers extending over a larger area. In some States, federal or confederal in structure, there intervene between the local governing bodies and the Central Government regional or district authorities with intermediate functions and powers, and it is sometimes difficult to tell whether such authorities can best be regarded as of the 'local' type, holding merely delegated powers, or as subordinate kinds of 'State', exercising less than full 'sovereignty'. Every student of the problems of federal government is familiar with this difficulty of definition, which there is no way of resolving neatly. Usually we tend, where a number of previously separate geographical areas have come under a common unifying Government, as in the United States or Australia, or South Africa, to think of the regional areas included as being of the nature of States; whereas, where a large area is broken up into smaller units for purposes of administration and the local inhabitants are given some say in the conduct of their own affairs, we tend to regard these units as belonging rather to the sphere of Local Government. But even this distinction is by no means hard-and-fast. There is in truth no clear line of division. We cannot say at all precisely where Central Government leaves off, and Local Government begins.

Yet, even if we cannot define precisely, we can form a good enough idea of the dividing line to serve most practical purposes, as long as our concern is limited either to a single

State or to a group of States possessing mainly similar social and political systems. Take for example the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, as it was between the Union of the British and Irish Parliaments in 1801 and the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. The Irish demand for Home Rule went decisively beyond anything that could have been met by the concession of the largest local government powers. Joseph Chamberlain, when he seceded from the Liberal Party on the Home Rule issue, was prepared to consider the grant to Ireland of considerably extended powers of local self-government. The Irish would have none of it: they wanted, if not at that stage full independence, at least the restoration of a separate Irish Parliament with wide legislative powers.

These complications, however, can be set aside for the moment. In England at any rate the line is at present clear enough. Parliament legislates for the whole country, and in doing so often imposes duties or confers powers on the elected local Councils. These Councils have no power of legislation: they can, broadly speaking, act only under powers conferred on them by Parliament or, occasionally, by ancient Royal Charter. They can, however, go to Parliament and ask it to pass on their behalf Private Acts conferring supplementary powers over and above those conferred by general legislation; and there is nothing, save the will of Parliament, to limit the powers that can be given in this way. The United Kingdom has no written constitution; and Parliament can at all times do what it pleases in altering the powers, functions and character of Local Government, either by giving or by taking away, or by setting up new types of authority or changing the areas over which particular authorities exercise control.

The business of English Local Government is primarily *administrative*—that is to say, it is concerned with the execution of laws passed by Parliament or of functions conferred by ancient Charters. Of the powers given it by law, some are mandatory, and others permissive. Some things the local authorities are ordered to do, and are responsible to the Central Government for doing, even if the local Councillors do not wish to do them and the local inhabitants would sooner they were not done. Other things they need not do

at all unless they wish to; and even in the case of things they have to do they have usually some discretion to do more or less. The width of this discretion varies widely from case to case: sometimes the local authorities are encouraged, usually by special grants-in-aid from national funds, to do more than the minimum absolutely required of them; whereas sometimes they are discouraged from doing more. In practice, their power to go beyond the minimum, or to use their optional powers, depends very largely on the wealth or poverty of their inhabitants and on the financial burdens involved in the services which they are under a positive compulsion to supply.

In recent times the number and complexity of these compulsory services have been increasing very fast. No year passes without Parliament passing some law which either imposes fresh duties on the local authorities or extends the scope of their existing duties. Sometimes, indeed, Parliament takes away a function which was previously entrusted to the local authorities and transfers it to national administration. A well-known example is the transfer of a part of Public Assistance to the nationally appointed and centrally controlled Assistance Board. Sometimes, again, the Central Government takes over financial and policy-making responsibility for a service previously paid for, wholly or in part, out of local funds, but leaves the actual execution still in the hands of the local authorities. This has been done in the case of the maintenance of the trunk roads transferred to the Ministry of Transport. On the whole, however, the new duties laid upon the local authorities have been much more numerous and important than those which have been taken out of their hands; and both local councillors and officials have much more to do than ever before. During the war they had to take on many emergency services, and in many of these they acted simply as the agents of the Central Government, which bore the entire cost. This, however, is unusual: in normal times the cost of most locally administered services is shared in one way or another between the local authorities and the national exchequer.

The multiplication and development of locally administered services have been accompanied by a rapid increase in the grants made to the local authorities out of national funds. The main source of local government revenue is the property

lying within the areas subject to their jurisdiction, except such of it as has been exempted by Parliament—*e.g.* agricultural land. On property which is not exempt the local authorities are empowered to levy rates, at so much in the pound, reckoned on the estimated annual value; but since 1929 industrial property has been relieved of three-quarters of the rates due on this basis, so that the main burden of local rates now falls on private houses, shops, and places of entertainment. Railways, too, have had their rates cut down on condition of passing on the benefit in lower charges to industry. These changes have greatly narrowed the basis of local taxation and have made it more difficult for local authorities to embark on any expenditure which they are not compelled to undertake, unless they are helped by large grants-in-aid from national funds. Their position would have become quite impossible if they had not been compensated for the loss of revenue caused by 'de-rating': this compensation was included in a new block grant made in accordance with a formula weighted to give some help to the poorer areas, partly at the expense of the better-off.

Local rates are notoriously an unfair form of taxation, both because the rateable value of a person's house or shop or office is no reliable indicator of his ability to pay and because many of the wealthier persons who use the locally provided services have moved out into suburbs or into the country outside the municipal boundaries and thus escape the high rates which are levied in towns where many poorer people live. Rates in country or suburban areas are usually a good deal lower than rates in industrial towns; and this is often a reason why the inhabitants of suburbs oppose the extension of the municipal boundaries as the towns grow. Thus, in many places, the main burdens of rating fall upon the poorer classes; and this causes great difficulties when the industries of an area are seriously depressed—for at such times the need for local expenditure rises as the sources of local revenue fall off. Owners of empty shops and houses are not liable for rates (except in Scotland, where half-rates are charged); but, even apart from special costs arising out of depression, local expenditures do not drop in proportion to a decline in population, for essential services must be kept in operation much the same. Everyone admits the unfairness of the local rating

system, and that it was made still more unfair by the Derating Act of 1929; but no one has yet been able to suggest—or at any rate to persuade Parliament to accept—any alternative method of raising local revenue. Local rates therefore continue as the main source of locally raised finance; but the system is subject to increasing strain, and is kept workable only by larger and larger national grants-in-aid. The growth of these national subventions has involved a greater measure of central government control over those locally administered services to which they have been specially applied, and therefore with much closer relations than formerly existed between the local authorities and the government departments chiefly concerned—above all, the Ministries of Health and Education.

With this change in the relations between central and local government has gone a tendency, very marked in recent legislation, to put more powers into the hands of the major local authorities, and to diminish in some degree the independence of the lesser agencies. This applies particularly to the County Councils, within whose areas the lesser authorities are situated. In the main, in the past, the County Councils and the smaller urban and rural authorities within each county have had separate functions and have been independent executive agencies in performing them. But there is now a tendency both to transfer certain functions bodily from the smaller authorities to the County Councils and to give the County Councils some supervisory functions in relation to the smaller bodies. These tendencies obviously make for more unified policy and administration and go some way towards meeting the need for large areas of service in face of modern changes in technique. But as against this they make local government activities more remote from the ordinary citizen, and may lessen the attractions of public service on the smaller authorities and public interest in the lesser local elections. There is indeed a perpetual conflict of views and objectives in relation to Local Government between those who stress the need for large areas of administration and control and those who emphasize the importance of keeping the closest possible touch between the ordinary citizens and the local bodies which are charged with managing their affairs.

There are in effect four different ways of looking at the whole problem of local government structure and organization.

The first of these is the technical. Ask an engineer concerned with water supply, or main drainage, or gas, or electricity, what areas he considers to be suitable for local government purposes: he will probably answer in terms of what would suit best the technical conditions of the particular service in which he happens to be expert. This will not be always the case. The water engineer, for example, may hold that there is so little possibility of making the areas which he requires for his particular purposes coincide with the areas needed for other local utility services as to say either that the supply of water ought to be taken right out of local hands and organized comprehensively on a national scale, or that the water problem must be dealt with by *ad hoc* methods, over areas entirely different from those employed for the organization of other services. The first of these conclusions would lead to the creation of a National Water Service, organized entirely apart from Local Government: the second might lead either to a system of Joint Water Boards, under combinations of Local Authorities, such as exist already in some areas, or alternatively to a National Water Service broken up into regions entirely unrelated to the existing areas of Local Government.

Or take what has actually happened so far in the organization of electrical supply. This began with the setting up of a large number of local undertakings, some municipal and some owned by joint stock concerns, for the generation and distribution of electrical current within restricted areas. Next came a number of large, privately owned power companies, whose primary business was generation rather than retail distribution. These sold current both to industrial consumers of electrical energy and to local distributing concerns which took current in bulk, and re-sold it to individual household consumers. The power companies mostly operated over fairly large areas, and in some cases they bought up local undertakings, which thereupon ceased to generate current and became mere distributors on behalf of the main concerns. The result of these developments was that the cost of generating and distributing current varied enormously from area to area, according to the scale of operation and the efficiency of the plant. Two developments followed. One was a tendency for holding companies to join in the process of buying out and

unifying the smaller concerns: the other was the establishment of the 'Grid' system under the management of the Central Electricity Board.

The 'Grid' was, in substance, a method of linking up 'selected' generating stations into a nationally co-ordinated system, without unifying the ownership of either generating or distributing plant. The 'selected' stations were those which either were most efficient, or were capable of being made so, and were conveniently located as links in the general supply chain; and to these were to be added new generating stations, either built by municipalities or private agencies in accordance with the Central Board's requirements, or, where no suitable agency could be found, built and owned by the Central Board itself. The 'selected' and new stations were to generate current for sale to the Board, which was to own and operate the system of main-line transmission cables known as the 'Grid'. The Board was to re-sell the energy brought from the generating stations to the distributive agencies, municipal or private, both purchase and re-sale being subject to a very elaborate series of regulations about prices. Thus, in the main, the 'Grid' system left the ownership of both generating and distributing concerns unaffected—that is to say, divided as before between public and private enterprise—but interposed between generation and retail distribution a new 'wholesaling' stage, which was brought under unified national ownership and management.

The 'Grid', however, was not planned or executed as a single nation-wide operation. It was brought into existence regionally, on the basis of a number of separate plans drawn up for large regional areas, in each of which the process of selecting stations and of deciding what new stations were needed was tackled independently. The regions adopted for this purpose had no connection with any areas of Local Government or with the regions in use for any other purpose. They were defined exclusively in relation to the particular service of electricity supply, and to the technical conditions of that service. No one, I think, suggested or could have suggested that they would make suitable regions either for other technical services, or for Local Government in any more general sense. They were simply electricity regions; and when the regional plans had been drawn up and executed, they

became simply decentralized areas of management for the nation-wide Central Electricity Board.

In England and Wales, these Electricity Regions were seven in number. Their very names indicate their highly special character. They were *South-East England*, stretching up from the South Coast through Cambridgeshire nearly to the Wash; *East England*, limited to Norfolk and Suffolk; *Central England*, including both East and West Midland areas, with Birmingham as centre; *South-West England and South Wales*, a single region extending from Hampshire to Cornwall, and across South Wales to Pembrokeshire; *North-West England and North Wales*, spreading through industrial Lancashire from Central Wales to Cumberland; *Mid-East England*, taking in Lincolnshire as well as most of Yorkshire; and *North-East England*, including the north-eastern corner of Yorkshire with Durham and Northumberland. It is possible to conceive of a regional scheme for local government purposes under which Wales would be divided into more than one region: it is totally inconceivable that any such scheme should merge North Wales with Lancashire and Cheshire, or South Wales with the counties south of the Bristol Channel. Yet the regions used for the purpose of planning the 'Grid' were probably well devised in relation to the technical requirements of the particular service affected by them.

The technical approach would almost certainly yield, taken by itself, a different set of regions for each service. The electrical experts, the gas experts, the transport experts, the land drainage experts, and so on, would all, for good reasons of their own, want different arrangements of the country into regions, even on the doubtful assumption of each group agreeing among themselves. The reasons for these differences would be partly geographical, especially in the case of drainage; but in most cases they would be much more historical, or at any rate would be greatly affected by what has actually happened already in the organization of the services concerned. If a particular power company has already organized the supply of electricity over a certain area, that may be a good reason for treating that area as a unit, or as part of a single unit, in the future, even though the planning engineer, drawing plans in the absence of any pre-existing arrangement, would have divided it between two or more areas. The existence

of a technical scheme already in working order is not always a valid reason for preserving it; but it is nearly always a strong argument, to be overborne only for very good reasons on the other side.

Thus, the purely technical approach leads not to any general regional plan for the grouping of local government areas, but to as many plans as there are services to be provided for—or perhaps, in some instances, right away from any regional basis to the conclusion that nation-wide unification is the only technically correct answer.

The second line of approach is administrative. I do not mean to imply that the technician can afford to ignore administrative problems, but only that they usually take no more than the second place in his mind, and that the administrator, who is not a technician, tends to look at the problem from a different angle. The question for him is How can I, or anyone who is set to run this service, best keep an eye on its working over all its length and breadth? He is more concerned than the technician as such with the problems of size, of the number of subordinate units to be kept under supervision, of distance from the centre to the periphery of the administrative area, of facility of communication, and of complexity. He wants an area that will be convenient to administer from all these points of view. As the answers to these questions depend a good deal on the personal ability of the manager, or on his estimate of the qualities requisite for complex organization, administrators will be much less likely to agree about areas than technicians, who are bound to be guided largely by objective considerations. Of course, the administrator will need to take much account of the technical conditions; and, if he is prescribing only for a single service, he and the technician will be quite likely to reach an agreed conclusion. If, however, the administrator is planning, not for a single, mainly technical service, but for a complex of services in most of which the administrative element predominates, the subjective factors will come largely into play, and different men will tend to give different answers, both because of varying estimates of their own and of other men's ability, and no less because of varying preferences for bigness and littleness in the organization of human affairs.

Thus, the administrators, though they may *exclude* some

solutions as inconsistent with administrative efficiency, cannot be looked to for clear or agreed answers based on their own special expertness in the arts of management.

The third angle from which Local Government can be looked at is that of the Central Government—or rather of the persons concerned in Central Government. From this point of view again widely different conclusions can be drawn, according to the type of Central Government that is in force, and the notions and ambitions of those who control it. A despotic Government ruling over a reluctant people will wish to have areas of Local Government that will provide as weak rallying points as possible for the forces of opposition, and will choose by preference areas which do not correspond to strong historical traditions or feelings of community. It will wish to break up such units of feeling, or to cut across them with its administrative divisions; and where it can it will make up artificial areas in which it will be difficult for any sense of local or regional solidarity to develop. The Government of revolutionary France, after 1789, for reasons akin to these—namely, the wish to break up the traditional loyalties associated with the ancient Provinces and to unify national feeling behind the new revolutionary State—created the highly artificial *départements*, which have ever since done duty as the administrative units for the major purposes of French Local Government. Even so, the French, keenly conscious of their underlying lack of the unity which has been their boast, have never dared to trust these artificial regions with the unfettered conduct of their own affairs. The *préfet* has brooded over them, if not like a master, like the servant of his master, the centralized State. Only Governments which feel comfortably assured of their citizens' fundamental loyalty to the State to which they are assigned dare trust local government institutions to the full, and give the elected representatives of the inhabitants, except in inessential matters, the final word.

The bureaucrat, by which term I mean the administrator acting for the Central Government and thinking in terms of its convenience, has everywhere a tendency to think of Local Government as an agency for getting carried out in detail the policies laid down by the central authority. From this standpoint, administration by the Local Authorities is an

alternative to direct bureaucratic administration by a central department or by some special central board or agency set up for a particular purpose. The choice between these methods depends mainly on the degree of uniformity that is aimed at. The State, unless it is sheerly despotic, must, in what it does itself, aim at treating its citizens on equal terms wherever they live (though it can, of course, have discriminatory rules for different classes of citizens on grounds other than those of their place of residence). Direct national administration by a department or board is therefore favoured where uniformity is wanted; whereas, where it is desired to leave room for diversity of experiment, or for the doing of more or less, this can best be done by leaving control in the hands of local bodies, subject to any conditions that may be deemed desirable, and with the aid of such subsidies as may be deemed necessary. With subsidies there always arises the question of the degree of control. Even if the Local Authority has a positive right to claim so much subsidy for so much service, someone has to settle how much service has actually been performed in due accordance with the rules; and the central body usually reserves this right to itself and thus secures a measure of control. Its control is very much greater when the total amount that can be claimed in subsidy is limited, so that each item of local expenditure making for subsidy has to be separately approved. The system of 'percentage grants' works very differently where there is no definite limit to the total and where there is such a limit. The limits imposed on grants-in-aid under the 'Geddes axe' after the first World War and after the May Committee's economy scare of 1931 added immensely to the powers of the central departments over Local Government.

In the matter of areas, except where such considerations as I mentioned a page or so ago are present, the bureaucrats differ. Some prefer, for tidiness of administration, large areas, which mean that they have fewer persons to deal with and need concern themselves less with a host of details; and those who take this view commonly favour the subordination of the smaller Local Authorities to the greater, in such a way that the Central Government deals directly as a rule only with the latter, which are left to apportion grants and to supervise execution in the smaller units. This view, however, is by no

means universal. Other central officials like controlling details and resist anything which will reduce their control over them. These prefer numerous small Local Authorities, with each of which the centre deals directly without any intermediate body to act as agent. They also very often oppose, for the same reasons, any decentralization of their own departments. Thus, when most departments set up some sort of regional machinery in 1939, in view of war conditions, the Board (now the Ministry) of Education stood out resolutely against any devolution of power upon regional officers, and continued to conduct its affairs from headquarters almost without change.

Thus the bureaucrats, whom I here distinguish from the administrators as persons whose main job is supervision from outside rather than direct management of a service, give no clearer answer on the question of the right areas of Local Government. They are divided, just as the local administrators are divided, although on somewhat different grounds. In relation to the current problems of English Local Government, this causes them, on the whole, to throw their weight against major changes; for bureaucrats as a group stick together, and are usually in favour of letting the *status quo* stand unless they can agree among themselves. Especially do they dislike stirring up hornets' nests unless they are fully convinced that they know the right answer—and it is wholly beyond question that any proposal to make major changes in local government structure will bring out hornets by the hundred.

The fourth line of approach to our problem—and much the least travelled—is from the standpoint of the local citizen. How, we must ask, does the ordinary citizen wish his country to be split up for purposes of local administration? We must ask: but it is quite remarkably difficult to get even the merest hint of an answer. Undoubtedly, the vast majority of citizens—and even of that minority which takes some active interest in public affairs—treat the existing structure of Local Government as a settled thing and ask no questions about it. No doubt, in particular cases keen questionings arise over proposals to include a suburban area within the boundaries of the town to which it is attached, or to re-group rural parishes in areas where local feeling happens to be strong. But these are exceptional cases; and it is safe to say that not one citizen in

a thousand has any clear opinions at all on the general issue of local government structure.

There is, however, a small minority whose members hold very definite opinions on this matter. During the past few years there has been a minor flood of proposals for local government reorganization. All the main associations of Local Authorities, from the Counties and County Boroughs down to the Parish Councils, have had their say. The Labour Party has published a plan, and the National Association of Local Government Officers another; and there have been in addition numerous personal projects. How many people have read these plans, or have the vaguest idea of what they contain—how many, I mean, outside the number of those who drew them up, or voted upon them, or received them in some special capacity—as local Councillors, or Labour Party delegates, or local government officials, for example? The answer, I am certain, is that hardly anyone outside these special groups knows anything about the matter, or is even conscious that any pressing problem of local government structure exists. Certainly, there is no popular movement in favour of any of the numerous plans that have been put forward—or, for that matter, against any of them. Certainly, the press is not interested; and there is hardly any public discussion of any of the issues.

Now this, of course, may be regarded—will be regarded by many politicians—as a very good reason for leaving the whole problem severely alone. If nobody is agitating for change—if there are merely a number of contradictory proposals advanced by various interested groups, none of them commanding any wide popular support, is not this good evidence that things are well enough as they are, and are much best let be? It is, indeed, a reason for supposing that there will be great political difficulties in the way of any major change; for a matter on which there are a great many different opinions, strongly held by small minorities, but regarded with indifference by most people—including most politicians—is calculated to give any Opposition the maximum of openings for attack on any measure which the Government may advance, and to give the Government the maximum of trouble in meeting the Opposition's case. Nor, at any rate in the short run, is local government reform likely to bring the Government

any popular credit, even if it be successfully carried through. The credit would come, if at all, only when the citizens had found out in action the benefits of the new plan; and with political leaders such post-dated and hypothetical credits stand at a very heavy discount.

We could at this point dismiss our fourth suggested line of approach by saying that, as the ordinary man or woman appears to have no views on the matter, there is no more to be said about it. But this attitude would be wrong. It is a most significant fact that the ordinary man has no opinion; and what it signifies is not that the ordinary man is contented with things as they are, but that the existing institutions of Local Government have, on the whole, signally failed to arouse his interest.

It may be argued that this is because Local Government is uninteresting, and that the ordinary citizen cannot be expected to get excited about it. Drains and dustbins are not exciting things, except when the drains get blocked up, or the dustbins remain unemptied and begin to stink. Even water supply, which can be an exceedingly interesting subject to villagers in a drought, is usually taken for granted in towns. In fact, the ordinary citizen in the modern town is accustomed to take a very great deal for granted—from roads and street-cleansing and refuse-collection and main drainage to the supply of water, gas, and electrical power and to the thwarting of his neighbour's potential desire to keep a pig in the back garden. As long as these things get done, with just tolerable efficiency, most town-dwellers ask no questions about them, and do not care by whom they are done, or consider themselves as concerned in seeing to it that they are done as well as possible. Villagers in general take less for granted, because they have less to take. Almost every village has its local grumbles about Local Government—sometimes that it is not getting what it ought to get, but also sometimes that it is being made to pay for what it does not want. But villagers, though they grumble much more than townsmen, and have in most instances better cause for grumbling, do not very often reach the point of feeling that it is any of their business to get matters put right, or that they have any power to influence the doings of the Rural District Council or County Council that is at fault. As for their own Parish Council, or

Parish Meeting, its direct powers are in most respects so small and its resources so limited that in nine cases out of ten it is still dismissed as hardly worth bothering about—though in fact, directly or indirectly, an active Parish Council can do quite a lot, as there are plenty of exceptions to show. In general, although talk about local government affairs flourishes more in the village than in the town, practical interest in Local Government itself and in its institutions is lower among country dwellers than among townsmen, and the idea of taking action to improve the quality of Local Government is even less often entertained.

Yet Local Government could be interesting, to townsmen and countrymen alike. It could be so, however, only if its business were to become, very much more than it is, the business of community-making and of organizing the life of those smaller communities of which the great community is made up. How little it is this can be seen from the extraordinary way in which the great task of building what Mr. Lloyd George called "homes for heroes" was tackled in most areas between the two World Wars. During that period more than four million new houses were built in Great Britain; and a high proportion of them were in suburbs which were adjuncts to the already built-up areas of large towns. A high proportion of these houses was built by private enterprise; but the municipalities built not a few, including a considerable number on big housing estates, mainly for working-class or near-working-class occupants. On both private and municipal estates, with a few honourable exceptions, hardly anything was done to provide more than the actual houses in which people were to live, with roads and gardens, and perhaps a little open space for rest and recreation. On a good many estates, there was even no provision, or almost none, for shops; and a great many were without either inns or any hall in which dances or meetings could be held or any kind of communal activity carried on—save to the extent to which schools could be used in the evenings; and in many cases, if not in most, nothing was done to adapt the school buildings for the dual purpose. No doubt, there was a good deal of improvement in these respects between 1919 and 1939, especially on municipally owned estates, and something was done by voluntary agencies, such as those connected with the

National Council of Social Service, to provide oases in the deserts of brick. But it was dawning only very gradually and imperfectly on the great majority of Councils or on the great majority of citizens who dwelt on new council or private enterprise estates that it was anyone's business to make the square miles of new residential accommodation into communities, or to equip them, group by group, with any of the amenities of living beyond house-room and the necessary minimum of sanitary, educational and utility services.

Of course, in these respects, the dwellers on the new estates were in a great many cases no worse off—and in other respects they were often much better off—than those who continued to inhabit the older built-up areas. It was nothing new for miles upon miles of brick-box houses to be put up with no care to equip their inhabitants with any of the means of living a satisfactorily rounded life. Pubs, indeed, the older areas usually had in plenty, and their back streets served them as playgrounds and community centres combined. But even if they achieved a way of community living for themselves, this achievement was nothing to do with the Local Authority which was supposed to represent them, and the Local Authority had no place in their affections as a means to the good life.

Our forefathers of the nineteenth century saw nothing wrong in this condition of the new towns which they created in such numbers as adjuncts to their power-driven factories and to all the wonderful apparatus of production which required the congregation of large numbers of people in a little space. The achievement of the good life for these people was regarded as a matter not for organized collective action by State or Local Authority, but for the three liberalizing agencies of self-help, philanthropy (including religious philanthropy), and profit-seeking enterprise. That these three have great achievements to their credit it would be foolish to deny. Self-help created not only Friendly Societies and Trade Unions and Savings Banks, but also Co-operative Societies, working-men's Clubs, and many of the less pretentious Ebenezers and Little Bethels that administered hope and self-confidence to the poor. Philanthropy began with dispensaries and hospitals, supplemented these with new churches and more pretentious chapels, and went on to

parks and open spaces, model dwellings for the industrious poor, and later clubs and settlements. Profit-seeking enterprise started off mainly with beer-shops and gin-shops, and advanced to music halls, theatres, and later on cinemas, skating rinks, dance halls, and greyhound racing tracks. The Local Authorities' part was small at the first, and remained for the most part unromantic. Neither the relieving office nor the cemetery was exhilarating; and the workhouse, if present, was gloomier than either of them. Baths and wash-houses and public libraries both began as philanthropic enterprises before the Local Authorities were persuaded to take them up. There was great backwardness in providing parks and open spaces in the poorer quarters of the towns, or within easy reach of them; and even Board Schools began only in 1870, and Public Secondary Schools only in 1902. It was left to philanthropy, aided by self-help, to set up and maintain Mechanics' Institutes; and the later developments of Adult Education came first mainly from the Universities and later from associations, such as the Workers' Educational Association, created chiefly by working-class effort. In Technical Education, under stimulus from the Prince Consort and the Great Exhibition, the Local Authorities were induced to play a rather larger part; but their achievement in this field was by no means notable and, such as it was, was due partly to private benefactions. In most towns, even in the richer central areas, museums and art galleries, where they existed at all, were starved of funds for upkeep and for new acquisitions, and became, in many cases, municipal collections exemplifying the bad taste of some defunct benefactor, quite out of relation to any contemporary ideals or interests. Music, except for an occasional band in the park, was regarded as entirely a matter for private initiative and provision; and though the brass bands blew lustily in the industrial centres, and the Welsh choirs sang sweetly, that was no thanks to the Local Authorities, which were deemed to be doing well if they prevented the poor from getting the cholera, or the small-pox, or drinking in typhoid germs from polluted water.

It should now be easy to see—though a great many people have not seen it yet—that this notion of leaving all the interesting things—interesting in themselves and not merely in their effects—to be done by a mixture of self-help, philan-

thropy, and profit-seeking enterprise, and of making the civic authority mainly an agent for the provision of a bare minimum of mainly sanitary services, *plus*, at a later stage, a bare minimum of education, was bound to leave the towns without effective self-government and without the means of making satisfactory communities. Local self-government is stultified unless it is directed to the making of living communities, and rests on broad enough foundations to enable it to deal with a wide range of things that people can use in common and can weave together into the texture of the sort of living that they value. To divorce the things that can be done at a profit from those that can be done only at a commercial loss is a disastrous error; and a second is to cut off those things which have to be done on a compulsory basis for all the inhabitants from those in which participation is a matter of taste and selective interest. Philanthropy, again, may perform a very valuable service either in pioneering in unexplored fields of communal provision, or in supplying works of supererogation beyond the minimum that ought to be made available as a matter of course. But when philanthropy is relied on as a substitute for other agencies in supplying the necessary minimum, the result is nearly always lop-sided and unsatisfactory. I know a village which wants to dance, but has been endowed by a philanthropist with a Village Hall on condition that dancing shall not be allowed in it. The existence of this hall, by meeting a part of the need, for a long time made it impossible to get up the zeal needed for building a new hall; and when at length a new benefactor helped to overcome this difficulty, the result was that the village had two halls, whereas it would have been much better off with one, with larger and more diversified accommodation. Moreover, it was only the luck of finding a second benefactor that ever enabled this village to get its dancing at all. I have taken the foregoing illustration from a village, because it came into my mind; but anyone who knows the poorer quarters of our towns will be aware of the number of curious buildings in them which cannot be adequately used because the philanthropists who provided them objected to something or other, or laid down such and such idiosyncratic conditions. Philanthropists are apt to be cranky people; and they appear crankier than ever when the effects of their last

testaments live on long after the sentiments which inspired them have gone utterly out of fashion.

I see too, looking back, that I have assumed dancing, for a community that wants to dance, to be a requirement of the good life that ought to be provided for as part of the indispensable equipment, just as much as drains and streets and cemeteries. But, of course, our ancestors who made our towns what they mostly are did not assume this. Even if they did not regard dancing as sinful, they thought people would get all the dancing they were entitled to—which was just as much as, by their readiness to pay for it, they made it worth the while of profit-seeking enterprise to provide. The *Palais de Danse* and not the Public Hall or Community Centre was the appropriate answer, according to this social philosophy; and Local Government was concerned only about those things which could be supplied neither by the response of profit-seekers to 'consumers' demand', nor by mutual self-help, nor by a philanthropy which was continually being warned of the danger of 'pauperizing' its beneficiaries. Local Government was mainly a matter of preventing epidemics, which might spread from the back streets to the more respectable quarters, of tidying up the central parts of the town as a matter of commercial, rather than of civic, pride and advertisement, and of ensuring that the town should be run economically, by business men for business men, in such a way as to keep down the obnoxious rates. No wonder this kind of Local Government was uninspiring to the ordinary citizen, for whom it did doubtless provide certain services that he could not afford to be without, but afforded nothing to which, as a man or as a woman, he could attach any glamour or any meaning associated with his conception of happiness and community.

Local Government has broadened out greatly in these latter days—not least because the actual housing of the people has tended to become to an increasing extent a recognized civic function. But, to return to the example from which we set out, how plainly did the stigma of the old narrow conception of Local Government rest on the public housing activities even of the 1920's! Had it not done so, would it have been possible for Local Authorities to build whole housing estates without even considering their equipment with the necessary adjuncts of tolerable community living?

What I am suggesting is that the current lack of interest in local government problems is due, not simply to the uninterestingness of the sanitary functions out of which most modern Local Government has developed, but to an utterly wrong conception of Local Government which we have inherited from the days when it was in general assumed that its functions should be essentially residuary and that it should deal only, or at any rate mainly, with indispensable tasks that could be performed with even tolerable adequacy neither by self-help on a voluntary basis, nor by philanthropy, nor by profit-seeking enterprise. This was surely a skinflint way of regarding it, and one which could not possibly lead to the building of decent communities. Local Government needs to be, and is slowly—but all too slowly—coming to be, looked at in a quite different light. Instead of treating it as the scavenger of the abuses with which no other agency can or will deal, we ought to regard it as the master-architect of the fabric of community-living, in city, town and village, and in the regions within which city, town and village are comprised. We ought to ask, not what other agencies can be induced to do, after a fashion, but what the local community can do best for itself, over a wider or a narrower field, according to the nature of the service to be supplied. We ought to leave the other agencies to fill in the gaps, not to use Local Government as a means of patching some of the rents they leave. Let the other agencies be used to do what they can do best, but to do it in co-operation with the Local Authority, and not in isolation from it. Let all the agencies, public and private, come together to make a master plan of what needs doing, and to consider in common which can do each job best. But, in case of rival claimants, let the final voice rest with the City, or Town, or Village, or Region, as an organized community, with a right to control and order its own means of providing the essentials of good living for all its inhabitants.

The City which Pericles glorified in his great oration was not a mere scavenger, or a residuary provider of what no one else thought it worth while to supply. True, the Athens of Pericles was not only a 'city', as we use the term, but also a 'City-State'. It was sovereign legislature as well as executive authority in relation to its collective affairs. But does that make so much difference, in relation to the matter in hand?

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

No doubt, the fact that our cities form parts of populous nation-States does make a difference, in the sense that they cannot be completely self-governing, and that a number of services will be both required of them and provided for them on a nation-wide scale. But to a fully sufficient extent the business of providing for the good life remains, and must always remain, a local matter—for the great city and for the village alike, and also for the region which includes them both. There is no need to repine at certain services, once locally organized, being taken under national management, where technical or administrative considerations make largeness of scale or uniformity of treatment desirable. There are plenty of things left for the local communities, of all sizes, to do for themselves, including both things that are now being done inadequately and yet more that are not being done at all, or, if they are being done, are done sporadically or lop-sidedly, or out of any relation to the human architecture of the whole community for which they are designed. Let us consider what some of these undone, or misdones, things are; for in them we may well find the answers to some of the most vexing problems of contemporary local government structure and organization.

## THE PLANNING OF TOWN AND COUNTRY

Town and Country Planning provides the key to the questions raised at the end of the preceding chapter—Town and Country Planning, that is, not as the mere orderly arrangement of houses and other buildings or as the ‘zoning’ of land for particular uses, but in the much wider sense of planning an orderly, comely and suitable framework for the lives of men. City, town and village are alike in that they constitute frameworks within which men carry on their affairs—affairs of production and affairs of leisure and recreation; affairs private, personal and domestic and affairs public; affairs associative and voluntary and affairs comprehensively collective. City, town and village are frameworks within which men work and play; love, like, dislike, hate, are glad or sorry, humorous or morose; do things apart or all together or in groups; learn, grow, reflect, define their relations with other men and with their God, if they have one; make friends, quarrel, fall foul of law or custom and play their part in shaping both; and in two words live and die. In city, town and village children are born and are brought up, well or ill: young people court and marry; and middle-aged people get settled in their habits and convictions, and take their colour from the environment to which they have grown used. Also, of course, people move in and out, changing their community affiliations and, often, creating new sub-communities on land vacated by the farmer or the market-gardener to make room for the growth of the built-up area.

Indeed, this making of sub-communities, or suburbs, has been the outstanding characteristic of recent urban growth, and constitutes one of the principal problems to be faced. A suburb is, by its very nature, not a complete community, and cannot have a fully independent life of its own. It is an adjunct to an existing community, to which its life has to be adjusted.

When a village is added to by a group of new local authority houses, usually no particular problem arises, unless the inhabitants are 'strangers', brought in to settle in connection with some new economic enterprise. The new houses are usually within easy walking distance of the essential village institutions—pub, school, shops, church and chapel, and perhaps Village Institute or Hall. There may be serious problems of human 'mixing', when strangers come in to a closely-knit village community with a strong common tradition; but there is in most cases no serious problem of physical planning—except of course from the narrower planning standpoint of not spoiling the village's beauty or upsetting the balance of its farms and holdings.

In the growth of towns quite different problems arise. The town equivalent of the small group of new dwellings added on to the village is the much bigger housing estate—sometimes big enough to hold as many people as a moderate-sized town. In such cases it is not nearly enough simply to plan the siting of the houses in a decent and orderly way, to allow enough space for roads and gardens, or even to allocate enough land for open spaces and as a 'reserve' for other kinds of building. If the new estate is to get a fair start, the early inhabitants must be enabled to move into it as a place already equipped with the indispensable apparatus for community-making. No doubt, if this is neglected, shops and other amenities will arrive in course of time—when the need for them has accumulated to the point of inducing some person or agency to supply them, either from the motive of profit or as a matter of Co-operative service or private philanthropy or public pressure. But most of them will arrive long after the need; and it is most unlikely that, even when they do arrive, they will be at all well balanced in relation to the need. Moreover, some of the most indispensable, from the standpoint of community-making, may easily fail to arrive at all; and in any event the new community will get a bad start, because the early settlers will be confronted with the impossible task of making bricks without straw.

All this was realized, and said, long ago by Ebenezer Howard, by Patrick Geddes, and by other pioneers of the community-making art. They said it chiefly about new towns, such as Letchworth and Welwyn; but it applies just as much to

suburbs, though the actual needs are not quite the same. The suburb, just as much as the brand-new town, has to be made into a community, if its inhabitants are to live well. The difference is that their community rotates in the orbit of a larger community, of which it forms a closely connected part. It needs its own institutions, to make it into a community; but a part of the function of these institutions is to link it to the parent town.

What institutions does a suburb need, in order to make it a centre of social living and to establish the right relations between it and the larger community to which its denizens also belong? Let us begin with the most obvious. It needs a school, and must have a school at once, either within its borders or very near at hand. But it needs more than this in the way of schooling; for quite a number of the children will be of secondary school age, or will have special educational needs of one kind or another. There must, accordingly, be easy access to schools of different kinds, and where this does not exist it must be provided from the outset—if necessary, by special arrangements for transport or by the meeting of the costs of transport out of public funds. No one's educational prospects must be impaired, more than is absolutely unavoidable, by the parents' removal into an outlying area. Secondly, the suburb's own school must be designed from the outset to meet the suburb's needs. It must be adaptable to other social uses, and can in many places best be built at the outset as school and institute combined, or at any rate upon a common site; and the site must allow ample room for growth. It must be equipped for films, for film-strip, and for music and dancing; and it must have not only garden ground, but room and scope for outside activities, such as rough building and what adults are apt to call "messaging about". An asphalt square must not suffice it for a playground, and its lesson-rooms must not give the children a feeling of being mewed up. In effect, it must be a good school, and more than a school, and must be sited in close relation to other community buildings. It must of course include proper arrangements for school-meals, and adequate quarters for the teachers as well as for the children, and for such adult activities as are to be included within its scope.

Next, the suburb needs a 'pub'—or the social equivalent

of a 'pub'—or rather something more than this. It needs a restaurant, with a proper bar parlour, or several, where people can drink and talk, and can also get meals, from snacks to feasts, pleasantly served. It needs, in the strictest sense of the term, a 'public house', and one equally open and welcoming to men and women and, apart from its bars, to children as well. I cannot insist too strongly on the importance of the 'pub', bars and all, or on the need for the 'pub' to be a restaurant as well and, at the right season, an open-air restaurant for those who like it so. One of the chief ways of making a community is over a drink; and for the community of men, women and children at which we are aiming, the bar must be redeemed from the sordidness into which it is apt to fall in the town (but not often in the village), and must become an adjunct to a restaurant open to all, to drinkers and teetotallers, men, women and children together—but not without catering adequately for the separate needs of the various groups, as well as for the common needs of all.

I want these Communal Restaurants to be publicly owned—built and equipped by the Local Authority itself. But I do not necessarily want the Local Authority to run them. They can be let out under licence to private caterers, subject to proper conditions or safeguards, or to voluntary associations of residents on co-operative lines—provided that they are kept open to all comers. There is indeed, as we shall see later, a great deal to be said for delegating their management upon the local residents whom they are to serve, while providing for centralized equipment and, to a large extent, for centralized purchase of supplies. But they must, if they are to serve their community-making purpose, be fully licensed; for otherwise an important part of the new community will not frequent them for talk as well as for eating—and it is indispensable to make them the living centres of the everyday interchange of local gossip and opinion. The divorce of drinking-places from eating-places is one of the worst destroyers of the local community: what is wanted is much more than a 'reformed public house'—it is a *convivium* for the whole suburb, or of course more than one, when the suburb gets big.

Thirdly, the suburb needs an Institute, either in close connection with the school or separate; and by an Institute I mean, not just a shed of wood or corrugated iron or concrete,

and not just a single long room with the rain playing drum-tunes on its roof, but a proper building, with rooms of different sizes for anything from a small committee or circle to a dance or a public meeting. This Institute must include a reading-room and must have a branch library; and its books must be frequently changed and its periodicals properly diverse. It must have comfortable chairs, and a pleasant appearance; and it must be as wide open to political as to any other clubs or societies. Attached to it should be tennis-courts, hard as well as grass, and a bowling-green, and facilities for other games *à choix*. It must be a club as well as an Institute; and it would be well to call it by the former name. There should be a small—a very small—family subscription to it, in order to make the residents feel it to be their own; but every new resident, man, woman or child, should be made an honorary member for the first year of residence without any subscription at all.

In the Club, but not limited to its members, should be a Citizens' Advice Bureau, with regular visits from a Poor Man's Lawyer. A branch of the Public, or County, Library has already been specified; and every type of civic or national official whom local residents are likely to need to consult—from the Food Office to the Assistance Board—should pay regular visits and have a sort of sub-office on the spot, in order to avoid unnecessary journeys for busy housewives or elderly people. Every sort of voluntary society should be encouraged to meet in the Club for the transaction of business, for the collection of dues, and for educational and social purposes; and such people as Youth Organizers, Music Organizers, and Educational Organizers should pay regular visits. The representatives of the local Council should attend periodically to report progress, to give an account of their stewardship, and to answer questions; and the local M.P. should come from time to time to a non-party residents' meeting. In short, everything should be done to make the Club, together with the close-by 'Public House' and school, the real centre of local activity over the widest possible field. Where possible, these institutes should be built in a single, harmonious group, with park and playing-grounds adjoining, but not away in the middle of the park, but close to the central shopping area, so as to be handy of access in the course of the daily round.

Among this group of buildings, it goes without saying, should be the Health Centre, with consulting rooms for the doctors practising from it, infant welfare centre, and equipment for simple treatment not requiring specialist advice or a hospital visit. I want the Health Centre to be separate from the other communal buildings, though near to them; for I do not want to group the community life round the doctoring aspects. I do, however, want the Health Centre to be much more than a surgery-cum-dispensary for a group of doctors. I want it to be also a centre of health education, and a vital part of the whole plan of civic equipment.

As for Churches and Chapels, people must have them as long as they continue to want them; and the less they stand aloof one from another and from the secular aspects of the community's life, the better for all. Church-building cannot, and should not, become again a function of the State, as it was largely made to be in the new towns created by the Industrial Revolution, when Parliament voted funds to help the Establishment to hold its own with the Dissenters. Denominations will have to build their own churches and chapels, where they want them and can afford them; but there is much to be said for providing a public building which can be hired for inter-denominational services and functions and where small sects can meet and be saved from the urge to spoil the appearance of the suburb with hideous tin tabernacles of their own. Personally, I do not like either churches or chapels, and think the desire for them would be greatly lessened if better, and more spiritual, provision were made for the communal secular needs of the people. But the rest of what I am saying is quite independent of this particular opinion. If we are to have churches and chapels, let us do all that can be done to integrate them into the general life of the community.

What more is needed? Shops, carrying a greater volume and variety of stock than the turnover justifies in a commercial sense while the suburb is young. The Co-operative Societies should be strongly urged to come in here, and to take long views, with an eye to the prospects of later development—as they can afford to do, better than the vast majority of private traders. The shops must be publicly built and owned, so as to get both control of design and a proper balance in relation to local needs. The necessity of shopping in the

centre of the main town should be kept as low as possible in this way, but not of course so as to check people from making shopping jaunts to the centre when they are so minded. And every shop lease should be subject to a code of behaviour, agreed on between the residents and the shopkeepers themselves.

Cinemas? That all depends—on the size of the suburb and on its distance from and ease of communication with the centre. But, in any case, the school or the club should have a proper cinema equipment, for full-sized films, and should be open for hire by the local Film Club, or by anyone else with a mind to give a show.

These, I think, are the essential institutions for any well-equipped suburb. In many cases, others should be added—an open-air swimming-pool, in the grounds of the Club; a bandstand, with room for open-air dancing; of course, a children's playground; a communal workshop, with benches and tools where the residents could do repair jobs that cannot be done at home; a communal garage, with repairs and washing facilities for small cars; a covered walk, in the open air, between the shopping centre and the park; a pets' hotel, where people could send their animals to board when they went on holiday, and a veterinary clinic attached to it; an open-air theatre; a communal safe-deposit for valuables; a communal exchange and mart for property; a small gallery for travelling exhibitions; and so on, through a list that can be almost endlessly prolonged, as soon as we begin to think of the suburb as a community, with a corporate responsibility for providing its denizens with the external conditions for a happily rounded life. There would be other major necessities to add if I were speaking of new towns and not of suburbs; but these belong rather to the civic planning of the whole town than to that of its parts and excrescences.

Purposely, I began with the suburb and not with the whole new town. I did so because I wanted to point out that all these needs of the new suburb are equally applicable to every part of the town—to the old inhabited districts as well as to the new. Any biggish town, whether it is growing new suburbs or not, is a larger community in which smaller local communities exist, however little recognition is given to their existence. Moreover, in most big towns there are areas which

could be, but are not, communities or parts of lesser communities within the greater community of the town. Every bigish town needs both integrating and breaking up into these smaller groupings—‘neighbourhood centres’, or ‘units’ as they are sometimes called. What I have prescribed for the new suburbs I am prescribing equally for these actual or potential lesser communities within the already built-up areas of our towns.

Most of these towns, as they exist to-day, are a social patchwork. Usually there is an old town nucleus, that in most cases gives its name to the whole area, either officially or in common parlance. Around this centre are villages, and sometimes other small towns, that have been engulfed; and joining up these old settlements, and often extending beyond them, are areas of building which have no separate local history behind them. On the outskirts are usually new housing estates, built under public or private auspices, strips of ‘ribbon development’ along the roads leading into the town, and in many cases areas of open building on highish ground where well-to-do people have settled at a low density in such a way as to preserve in some degree the rural amenity of their surroundings. How much of this complex type of urban community falls within the towns as defined for purposes of Local Government varies enormously from case to case. Very seldom is the whole area under a single municipal authority; and still less often does the central municipality’s area include any substantial green belt or tract of open land.

The position is more complicated still where two or more towns have run into one another in the process of expansion, so that there has come into being what geographers call a ‘conurbation’ in the wider sense of that term. Manchester and Salford are two old towns lying right up against each other and surrounded on all sides by other towns and villages into which they have run; and there is no clear line of division between Greater Manchester and Bolton, Bury and Oldham to the north, or Stockport to the south. Newcastle and Gateshead are old nuclei held asunder by a broad river—the Tyne—and running similarly into other urban areas on both banks. Brighton and Hove have no more than a purely arbitrary boundary; and it would puzzle anyone to say where the human watershed between Leeds and Bradford lies. In

a few cases, a number of independent boroughs have coalesced legally as well as in fact. Stoke-on-Trent is the unified Borough of the 'Five Towns', which were actually more than five. Spenborough, in the West Riding, is a similar administrative coalescence on a smaller scale. But usually, independent boroughs are most reluctant to lose their identities in larger units; and what is in effect one town or city has often more than one Mayor and Corporation, to say nothing of mere Urban Districts. Manchester and Salford, Newcastle-on-Tyne and Gateshead (and also Tynemouth and South Shields), are all County Boroughs, with completely independent jurisdictions, apart both from one another and from the Administrative Counties around them.

Hitherto, the administrative extension of a Borough, county or non-county, has involved the simple extinction of all the representative machinery of the neighbouring areas which have been swallowed up. Boroughs and Urban Districts admit the existence of no lesser units within their borders, save as more electoral divisions for parliamentary or local government purposes. If Swellborough, or even Swelltown U.D.C., absorbs Little Victim, the effect is that Little Victim ceases to have any publicly recognized existence, even if it continues to live on in the minds of its people. Even the electoral wards, at any rate for local government purposes, seldom correspond at all to the old local centres of population; and for parliamentary purposes periodical attempts to equalize electorates often sweep the old points of focus away. Administrators commonly regard this as an advantage: it is one of the most frequent claims on behalf of the County Boroughs that they alone enjoy fully unified Local Government in the hands of a single, responsible authority. The advantage, however, is by no means unmixed. The administrative convenience is doubtless great, for certain services that need large-scale management. But it is a still more serious disadvantage that the denizens of the smaller areas within the Boroughs are left with no instrument for community-making within their own narrower circle.

I hope to make it plain later in this book why and how I want to re-discover these lost communities—or rather to enable them to re-discover themselves and to set about the business of re-making their small community lives—and also why and how I want to facilitate the making of new communities out

of parts of the built-up urban areas that have grown up, not round an old nucleus, but higgledy-piggledy, merely by the filling up of gaps between the settlements that have been swallowed up. What I want to do at once is to assert that the key to these attempts is to be sought not mainly in the breaking-up of the services which are at present uniformly administered over the entire municipal area, but in the development of additional services, suitable for small-scale management and of such a nature as to arouse the keen, local interest of fairly small neighbourhood groups. In the preceding pages I hope I have given the reader at least some notion of what I have in mind.

In relation to new suburbs, the size of the community unit is broadly determined by the construction plan, at any rate where the suburb is being established as a single housing estate, or group of housing estates. As planning develops, this will be more and more so; for the size of building projects will be under fuller control, for private as well as for municipal enterprise, and it will be less easy for building speculators to tack their own smaller projects on as they please to the major extensions. As against this, the re-division of existing towns into smaller units, or 'neighbourhood areas', presents much more difficult problems; for there is no easy way of determining how many such divisions there ought to be. Decision can be arrived at only by skilled survey of each town, such as Professor Abercrombie has attempted in his plans for London, in which he has tried to uncover the lost tribes of the Great Metropolis, and to give some recognition to their distinctions as a means of encouraging them to become more consciously distinct. Given proper surveys, by skilled sociologists and planners, the thing can be done everywhere; and, in proportion as it is done, the pattern of a new small-scale unit of urban government will begin to emerge.

I have no patience with those who, whether they oppose or lamentingly accept as necessary an all-out building effort during the next ten years or so, croak that, if we set out to meet the people's housing needs at our best speed now, the time will soon come when there will be next to nothing left for the building industry to do, and that we shall have as much trouble then over scaling it down as we are having at present in scaling it up. Have these croakers really looked

at our towns, great or small, poked their noses down the back streets, and sniffed the urban air? The overtaking of the housing shortage will be the signal for the grand pulling down; and only when that time comes can we hope to tackle effectively the physical tasks of community-making in our existing towns and cities—except those which have been blitzed enough to clear space for an earlier re-building.

A large part of the task of re-making the communities which have been nearly obliterated by dense urban building is necessarily physical; and accordingly much of it will have to wait awhile. It is not, however, wholly a physical task; and there is much that can be done with only a little building—or pulling down. There is, in particular, no good reason why administrative changes should wait on physical reconstruction, or why we should not re-start small areas of local administration with much smaller functions than we mean to give them when we can: provided only that the jobs they are given are interesting enough, and closely enough related to the people's lives, to evoke the requisite response.

What, then, can we do, in Ancoats or in Deritend, in Scotland (Liverpool) or in Armley, to create anew the spirit of community-making among the people who live in these bits of cities? We can endow them with representative Councils, set up to work within and under the supervision of the Councils of the cities of which they are fractions; and we can then entrust to them certain functions, mainly such as the greater Councils either have not undertaken hitherto, or have undertaken only to a very limited extent, or only as an emergency measure during the war. Here are a few examples.

We can give them rights in the use of the local schools out of school hours, and can make sure that in building or re-building schools we adapt the buildings as far as is practicable for use by adults. We can abolish School Managers, and put the schools under the new Local Councils.

We can oppose tooth and nail the closing of Communal Restaurants, and can hand the Restaurants over to be managed (and new ones opened) by the new Local Councils, with such arrangements as may seem expedient for centralized purchase of supplies by the major Councils, and for central inspection and audit.

We can authorize the new Local Councils to requisition large houses and to fit them up as Clubs or Institutes, pending the provision of more suitable buildings.

We can hand over the management of local playing-fields and open spaces, and can give the new Local Councils power to acquire additional 'lungs' for their crowded populations.

We can, as a temporary measure, give these smaller Councils the management of requisitioned or 'squatted-in' dwellings within their areas.

We can authorize the new Local Councils, where they think fit, to draw up street bye-laws for the improvement of local amenities by concerted action.

We can authorize these new Councils to take up, and present to the major Council, *any* grievance which exists among the local inhabitants and concerns a matter which is within the major Council's competence.

Finally, we can make it compulsory for the locally elected Councillors who sit on the major Council to meet periodically the new local Council and hear what its members have to say, and also report to it on the major Council's designs and policy. These members of the major Council should moreover be, I think, *ex officio* members of the smaller body—a sort of local Aldermen.

All this would be, at the least, a good beginning; and it would in no way break up the large-scale administration of any service which needs unified and uniform management. It would involve an extension of local government activity into new fields, closely related to the daily lives of the people and to their immediate associations with their neighbours in small areas. It would be an admirable experiment in the kind of democracy—perhaps the only real kind—that starts with the co-operative activity of small groups of people in matters which they are in a good position to understand, and builds up to larger forms of association on this foundation of small-scale self-government. For the little men, lost in an ocean of vast problems over which they can have no real mastery because, however soundly they feel about ends, they have no adequate grasp of means, a self-government in little things which directly matter is the necessary foundation of democratic control over a wider field. Local self-government is supposed to provide this foundation; but it does not, because the areas

requisite for the performance of most of its existing functions are too big to serve as effective neighbourhood units. In order to make Local Government work democratically for the large areas over which much of its work must be unified, we must find means for men to co-operate constructively in the public service on a smaller scale. Nor is there any reason why this should not be done without any prejudice to the co-ordination over large areas wherever this is technically or administratively desirable. Indeed, we can afford to make our units of Local Government bigger only to the extent to which we make them smaller too.

In country areas the problems are somewhat different. The villagers, where they live in villages that are more than hamlets, can have, where they so desire, their Parish Councils, and the villages and hamlets and scattered habitations are grouped together under the government of the Rural District Councils, which have been, in most counties, re-grouped into better-planned, and usually bigger, units during the past two decades. Over these is the County Council, tending to gather greater powers into its hands. The villager thus has three separate local governments, where the inhabitant of a County Borough has but one, and the inhabitant of a non-county Borough or of an Urban District only two. Three are too many, just as one is too few. There is no room for both Parish and Rural District Council side by side with the County Council: and clearly, if one of the three is to go, it must be one or other of the smaller authorities. Most County Councils are none too extensive in their jurisdiction for the services which need fairly large-scale administration; and to propose breaking up the Administrative Counties would be to fly straight in the face of current tendencies in planning and administration. Setting out from this assumption, a number of local government reformers, including some in high places, have urged that Parish Councils should be abolished: indeed, it is rumoured that, in official projects of reconstruction, the Parish Councils have had a narrow escape, which may be no more than a reprieve. Yet, if either Parish Councils or Rural District Councils ought to be swept away, surely the Rural Districts are much the fitter to die: for on the whole they stand neither actually nor potentially for real communities, with any foundation for a coherent feeling of solidarity about the

problems of the areas which they are supposed to represent. There are *some* Rural Districts which possess a real unity; and by all means let these be suffered to survive. But few will deny that *most* Rural Districts are purely artificial assemblies of villages, hamlets and farms. If they had been more than this, they would not have submitted so easily to being chopped and changed as they have been under the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1929.

The critics of the Parish Councils say that they have mostly failed either to achieve anything worthwhile or to become the focusing points for local loyalty. What else could be expected of them, in view of their want of funds, of power, and of encouragement? As long as both County Councils and Rural District Councils exist, there cannot be adequate room for Parish Councils as well; and, in any contest, the smaller authorities, lacking both funds and proper officials, are bound to get the worst of it. The only exceptions occur either where the village finds a quite exceptional leader, or where it is in fact an embryonic town, well on the way to setting up for itself as an independent Urban District.

What I urge is this. Let the existing distinction of powers between Urban and Rural Districts be done away with, and a single type of County District take the place of both. Let those Rural Districts whose inhabitants so decide, on a poll, remain as County Districts, but with the right of any considerable village to contract-out, and set up on its own. Let the remaining Rural Districts be abolished, and let their powers be transferred to the Parish Councils, with their areas re-adjusted so as to take in outlying hamlets and lesser villages. Let each of these new parish areas have its own Council, and any village or hamlet within its area that so wishes have its own Parish Meeting, with purely advisory functions. And, last but not least, let the new Parish Councils be enabled to take over, under the direct supervision of the County Councils, functions of the kind I have proposed for the new Local Councils within the Boroughs. Let them, for example, 'manage' their own schools, take over the Village Halls and Institutes, run Communal Restaurants for the villages (Why not?), and assume the general task of tidying up the villages and caring for village amenities. Let them run their own allotments and small holdings, their playing-fields, their local

water-supplies, with such help and co-ordination from the County Council as may be needed in each case. Let them, in addition, play a larger part in planning and providing houses, again in conjunction with the County Council. All this, of course, has its financial implications, which will be considered later: they are mainly a matter of re-distributing resources as well as functions, with, of course, the provision of some fresh revenue to cover new services that cannot pay for themselves.

I want the Parish Councils, rather than the Rural District Councils, to survive, because I feel sure that the units of modern Local Government ought to be either large or small, and not betwixt and between. There is an unanswerable case for large units of administration, with great resources at their back, capable of tackling extensive projects and of planning comprehensively over wide areas; and there is a no less cogent case for really small units—small enough to be able to maintain close touch with the individual citizens and to be directly responsive to their wishes. Of course, these latter cannot be suitable for the planning or, in the main, for the execution of major services; and from the standpoint of tidiness and uniformity their work will be inferior to what would be done were the same things placed in the hands of bureaucracies able to operate on a larger scale. But tidiness and uniformity are by no means the only desiderata. People do not all want the same things; nor will all areas be served most to their satisfaction by being given fixed and uniform treatment. Local Government inevitably involves compromises between giving people what they want and what they ought to want—or rather what national opinion, as embodied in legislation and in administrative practice, declares that they ought to want. There must be, in the case of the main essential services, a common minimum everywhere enforced; and, wherever differences of treatment from place to place are likely, as in the fixing of scales of cash benefit under the Poor Law, to engender strong feelings of injustice and discrimination, either the State must take over the service and administer it uniformly on a national scale, or there must be a fixed code administered by local bureaucracies such as really small authorities cannot be expected to maintain. It is, however, a great error to jump from this conclusion to the

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

quite different dogma that everything needs doing tidily, uniformly, and on a grand scale. Any such conclusion is quite inconsistent with democracy in any real sense of the term; for democracy is nothing unless it means in the last resort letting the people have their own way, not only in the mass, by means of an aggregate vote on a nation-wide scale, but also in their lesser groups and societies, of which the great society is made up, and through which it is made articulate in such a way that the less clamorous voices can be heard.

## THE CASE FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

TOWN and Country Planning, as a recognized part of the service of Local Government, is a newcomer; and its functions are still very imperfectly defined and understood. It is broadly true that, up to a very little while ago, any person who owned any patch of land could do what he liked with it, provided that he did not cause an actionable nuisance to his neighbours, such as the law courts would take notice of, and provided that, in towns, he observed such building bye-laws as might be locally in force. There was no attempt—except where a private landowner was vigilant to safeguard the amenity of his estate, as well as eager to increase his rents, or where some development company set out to create an upper-class residential district, in which the preservation of amenity was an important element in money value—to plan the use of land in such a way as to avoid the unnecessary destruction of natural beauty. Nor was there any attempt to protect good agricultural land from being used for building, or any zoning of areas for different types of development, so as to keep factories and houses from being aggregated in disharmonious confusion. There was hardly any attempt to avoid traffic congestion in towns; and all round them ribbon development along the main roads was allowed to proceed unchecked.

When Town-planning was instituted, very, very tentatively, in 1909 as a function which urban Local Authorities could assume if they wished, the conception of it was still very narrow in the minds of those who drafted the legislation. There was practically no control over areas already built up—for that would have been regarded as altogether too much interference with the rights of private property. The owners of undeveloped land, however, were not, in the year of Lloyd George's famous 'Land Tax Budget', regarded with quite so much tenderness as the owners of buildings already in being; and the thin end of the wedge of control was inserted at the point of least resistance. It was a very thin end.

Scarcely more happened than that a number of local government officers made new plans of the unbuilt spaces in and around their towns, and drew on them wishful projects for guiding development this or that way, and marking out special areas as suitable for factories or working-class housing, or good-quality middle-class residential settlement—and then hoped for the best.

From first to last, the greatest obstacle to the effective growth of Town-planning has been the necessity of compensation. Even as recently as the 1930's, the terms on which compensation would have to be paid totally wrecked the Act of Parliament passed for the prevention of ribbon development; and that is only a spectacular instance of a force that has made against effective planning over a very much wider field. It is not only that the compensation that may become payable in respect of a particular patch of land may be excessive; it is also that, when an excessive sum has been paid in one instance, all the land near-by is apt to become infected with the same inflated value. This tendency was fully recognized by the Uthwatt Committee of 1941-2 in its famous report, in which it used the term 'floating value' to express its meaning. What the term signifies is this. Suppose a town to be growing at the rate of  $x$  acres of new building a year. There are in most cases round its existing built-up area, not  $x$  acres, but many times as many, that are about equally 'ripe' for building. Only a fraction of these available acres can actually be built upon for many years to come, unless there is a sharp rise in the rate of expansion; but, even where no such rise is expected, any patch of land on which building is actually projected will at once rise from its 'agricultural value' to a very much higher level based on the ground-rent that can be extracted for it as 'building land'. Thus, land will be acquirable for building purposes only at this inflated value, which will in practice attach to all the land supposed to be 'ripe' for development, however little of it can actually be developed. Till the sites for building have actually been acquired, no one can say which patches will be built upon; and the effect will be to raise the total value of the land round the town, as measured by the cost of acquisition, to a purely fictitious level. Of course, the prices at which such land can be bought in the open market will not rise, except in the case

of a local land monopoly, by the full difference between 'agricultural' and 'building' value. But all the land will rise in price to some extent on account of the 'building value' which can in reality be assigned only to some of it; and, as soon as a Local Authority or an Estate Development Company is known to have fixed on a particular site, the full 'building value' will be demanded for it, and will probably be conceded if the case goes to arbitration on a failure to agree about the price. Moreover, if a Local Authority needs land for purposes other than building—say, for playing-fields or for reservation as part of a 'green belt'—the price to be paid will be similarly inflated.

In order to make possible the acquisition of land for development at a reasonable price, and also in order to facilitate the undertaking of development in the right instead of the wrong areas and the dispersal of populations from congested or over-built areas, the Uthwatt Committee put forward a proposal for the public acquisition of the 'development rights' in all 'undeveloped' land—a category so defined as to include land in agricultural use. It proposed that the State, without disturbing the existing ownership of the land, should take over all the development value supposed to attach to it, with the right to acquire, at the 'undeveloped' or 'agricultural' value, any land actually needed for development. The 'development rights' were to be bought out, not by paying each individual owner what he claimed, or what an arbitration tribunal following current practice would have assessed, as the value of his land, but a share in a global sum, to be arrived at by assessing the total value of all the undeveloped land in the country. The purpose of this method of assessment, which is similar to that which was actually used when the State bought out the owners of coal, was to avoid paying the fictitious values that would have been claimed if each parcel of land had been assessed separately, at a potential 'development' value which could not in fact have been realized for more than a small part of the total.

An alternative to this proposal of the Uthwatt Committee would, of course, have been to nationalize the undeveloped land outright, with such provisions as might be approved for leaving the existing owners in possession as tenants unless their land was actually needed for public use. The language used by the Uthwatt Committee shows that it rejected this

solution, not necessarily because it did not approve of it, but because it saw no chance of it being accepted politically—as indeed there was no chance at the time when the Report was drawn up. Since then, the political situation has changed; and it would clearly be both better and simpler to adopt the more radical solution. If all the ‘undeveloped’ land in the country were publicly owned, it would become practicable to draw up and enforce a comprehensive national plan of land-use, and to guide development in accordance with the national interests. If only ‘undeveloped’ land were acquired, the problem of replanning in areas already built upon would be left to be tackled in other ways; and it would be a still better and simpler solution for the State to take over the ownership of all land, including land already covered with buildings.


Indeed, this solution is the only one that can make possible really satisfactory planning, on the more comprehensive lines on which planning has come to be thought about to-day. One of the greatest obstacles to the much-recommended policy of dispersal of population, designed both to reduce congestion in the central areas of existing towns and to prevent the piling-up of new suburbs round the fringes of the built-up districts, is the potential fall in urban land-values as a consequence of such a policy. The owners of land in the centres of towns fear that less congestion would mean lower ground rents for central sites; and the owners of land nearer the edges fear a similar fall in value. They would all claim to receive compensation for any losses brought about by public action in promoting dispersal. If, however, all land were unified under one ownership, these losses would not occur. The falls in urban land values would be offset by the rises of value in the new centres to which populations would be removed—or at any rate the total loss would be of small amount, and would be a tiny price to pay for getting rid of the chief financial cause of congested central and ill-placed suburban building. Nationalization, of course, would involve no disturbance of present occupants except where this was necessary for purposes of improved planning; and compensation could be assessed on the global principle proposed by the Uthwatt Committee just as well if the State were acquiring the land itself as if its purchase were limited to the ‘development rights’.

If all land (or even if all 'undeveloped' land) were to become public property, there would have to be some body to hold and administer the land on behalf of the public. The proposal commonly made is that there should be a National Land Commission, publicly appointed under parliamentary powers, to hold the land, to undertake necessary improvements, and to grant leases both for building or other development and for farming or forestry, subject to conditions designed to preserve amenities, to encourage the most productive use of land, and to ensure the observance of proper planning conditions. Such a body, if it were operating on a national scale, would obviously need to be much decentralized; for otherwise it would become impossibly top-heavy. It would have to work mainly through regional and local offices and officials in dealing with the hosts of detailed problems that would be arising every day in connection with farm and building leases, road development, and a host of other matters involving land-use.

The question therefore at once arises whether it would be better to operate the public control of land-use through a decentralized national authority, which would be bound to be largely independent of parliamentary supervision, and to work on bureaucratic lines, or through some sort of regional machinery, more directly related to the inhabitants of the various areas concerned. There is surely everything to be said in favour of the latter solution—if only we can find or devise regional bodies capable of undertaking the task.

If the control of land-use were regionalized, it would evidently work in with an extension of Town and Country Planning to a corresponding regional scale. Hitherto, as we saw, the authorities for Town and Country Planning have been the Boroughs and Urban and Rural Districts—except where the lesser authorities have voluntarily handed over their planning powers to a County Council. The Joint Town Planning Committees which have been constituted in many areas—apart from their lack of adequate executive powers—have covered districts of all shapes and sizes, and have been set up on no co-ordinated plan. Nor has there been any prospect, under existing legislation, of their growing together into effective regional units, capable of constructive planning over large areas. They were not designed for this purpose,

nor can they be so adapted as to serve it. If we want Regional Planning, as an essential element in our widening conception of Town and Country Planning and of controlled use of land, we must consider the establishment of new, special authorities for this purpose, as a major development of the local government structure.

I have spoken of 'Regional Planning', as distinct from 'Town and Country Planning' in the narrower sense in which provision is already made for it in the local government set-up. I must now try to make clear what I mean by this distinction. Town Planning, as it was conceived in terms of the earlier Town Planning Acts, was essentially a matter of the lay-out of particular towns: it was concerned with the street pattern, with the zoning of new factory and residential areas, with the clearance of slums and of especially obnoxious obstructions to traffic, and, usually to a minor extent, with beauty—or at least with the limitation of ugliness. Sometimes, town plans extended to suburbs or even to a belt of country round the town; and as the conception of joint planning developed after 1919 they had sometimes a wider spread, so as to embrace groups of secondary towns round a great city, with the intervening tracts of country—if there were any. But Town Planning, in practically all cases, could be symbolized thus—, by a dot with a circle round it; the dot standing for the heavily built-up central area of the town, or for the inner part of the big city with its secondary centres round it. There was, in this kind of planning, always one centre which was *the centre* of the area that was being planned, both in the sense that it was the most heavily built-up and usually the most populous part of the whole area, and in the further sense that it was the main business centre for shopping and for every sort of financial or legal transaction and also the main centre for amusements.

As soon as Town Planning was extended to become Town and Country Planning, this concentric conception of the areas to be planned came to be out of place in connection with a great deal of the planning that needed to be done. Its survival probably accounted, at any rate in part, for the giving of the main planning powers to the Urban and Rural Districts rather than to the County Councils, while a certain uneasiness about it led to the admission of the County Councils to a place

on Joint Planning Committees and to the permission to County Districts, if they wished, to hand over their planning functions to the County Councils. In some cases, the dot-and-circle pattern fitted the conditions of the Rural Districts, where a District consisted of a group of villages and hamlets all looking towards a central village or a small market town which was administratively no more than a Parish. But this structure was exceptional. In very many cases the market centre for the villages of the Rural District was a town, large or small, that had been constituted a separate Planning Authority; and in such cases it was quite impossible for the Rural District to plan on the dot-and-circle pattern, the dot—or perhaps several dots, for its villages might look towards different market centres—being outside its control. It could, no doubt, if the authority of the market town agreed, join with it and perhaps with other Districts in establishing a Joint Planning Committee; but, even so, in many cases, the dot-and-circle pattern would fail to fit. The Rural District might even have to connect itself with several Joint Planning Committees, and might find itself in difficulties because their several plans did not agree.

In truth, as soon as the conception of planning comes to be extended from a purely urban meaning to one which is to be applied to the whole country, it can no longer be a matter of considering single urban centres and their environs, or of treating the country areas as mere space for the outgrowth of the towns. What has to be planned is no longer a number of urban settlements of varying size and complexity, with blank spaces in between, but a whole country, with cities, towns, villages, hamlets and scattered habitations dotted about it. There is no longer, from the standpoint of the planner, either a single centre or a number of centres for each of which a quite separate plan can be made. There is a land surface of which every sector is important and must be taken into account; and the plan that results must be drawn up for the good of the whole and of all the parts, and not to suit the interests of a number of major urban centres only.

Thus, whereas Town Planning appeared to be essentially a local matter, Town and Country Planning is essentially national, and involves master considerations which have to be determined from a national point of view. But, as we have

seen, no national body can itself tackle the immense mass of detail which is involved in applying any general plan to hundreds of towns, thousands of villages, and hundreds of thousands of farms and scattered dwellings. If the job is to be done under national auspices, it will have to be done with the aid of thorough-going decentralization; and, as I have already argued in the case of land-use, there is everything to be said, if it be practicable, for preferring to the mere decentralization of a centrally controlled authority, administration by local or regional bodies emanating from the inhabitants of the areas concerned.

As soon as the advance is made from the preparation of plans for single towns and their environs to the planning of the entire country, including every sort of land-surface, whether built on or not, and whether likely to become 'ripe' for building or not, the whole nature of planning is changed. Broadly speaking, single towns and even great cities can only take what comes to them, in the way of industrial development and of population, including what they can attract by means of advertisement and propaganda and of such inducements as they are in a position to offer. They may be able by offering rate subsidies, or cheap and abundant supplies of good water, or well-equipped factory estates of their own construction, to induce more industrialists to come into their areas than would come if no such attractions were offered. Industries can be relied on—or at any rate it has been so hitherto—to attract population, if houses are available; and a forward housing policy has therefore been in the past an important factor in adding to a place's attractive power. But beyond what can be influenced by methods such as these, towns get the populations that come to them without any action on their part; and when towns make plans which involve estimates of the future course of population, these estimates, as far as they are realistic, are based mainly on what seems likely to happen to the local population apart from any action by the Local Authorities, designed to make it rise or fall.

From the standpoint of national planning the situation is quite different. The national planners, too, have in the main to make their calculations in terms of a total population the size of which is beyond their control—except, of course, in countries which have planned schemes of immigration or

emigration. The national planners, however, can hardly avoid considering, as an integral part of their plan, how they wish the population, in the interests of efficiency and well-being, to be distributed about the country. They may, no doubt, be left without effective means of influencing this distribution, as the Ministry of Town and Country Planning actually is. But, if they lack such means, and if means are lacking to the Government as a whole, national planning is largely stultified. It is reduced to a series of negative attempts to prevent a number of undesirable things from happening: it cannot be National Planning in any really constructive sense.

In Great Britain to-day, what power there is to control the distribution of population rests on two main factors—the limited power to control the setting up of new factories under the Distribution of Industry Act of 1945, which in practice applies only to a number of specially scheduled 'Development Areas', and the much farther-reaching power to control building operations as long as the war emergency is deemed to last. Under the Distribution of Industry Act, the Board of Trade can take special steps to attract industry into the 'Development Areas', both by promising facilities on ready-made Industrial Trading Estates and by helping to secure grants of capital on easy terms from the government companies set up for this purpose. The 'Development Areas' are, with only minor changes, the old Depressed Areas, formerly called in official language 'Special Areas', of the pre-war period; and something has been done to induce new types of industry to settle in them—especially types which employ a high proportion of female and unskilled labour. But the success of these achievements, such as it is, has been due mainly to the knowledge on the part of business men both that they would not be given permits for factory-building elsewhere and that they would probably fail to get labour in view of the great difficulties in the way of movement, with housing accommodation as scarce as it is and is bound to remain for some time to come. The effectiveness of government measures for planning the distribution of industry and therewith of population in practice depends on the abnormal situation in which at present this planning is being done; and, so far, no powers have been taken which would be effective if it became again as easy as it was between the wars for

capitalists to build factories where they pleased and to attract labour to their factories merely by the offer of employment.

Thus, the extent to which, beyond the immediate emergency, any government authority is to be armed with powers to control, or even seriously to influence, the distribution of industry and population remains unsettled; and with it is left unsettled the question whether there is in fact to be real planning on a nation-wide scale. There is, however, a further instrument in the Government's hands—the New Towns Act of 1946. By this measure, the Government itself has assumed responsibility for the foundation and initial development under Commissioners of its own appointment of an unspecified number of 'New Towns'—which are to be either brand-new towns on the model of the Garden Cities of Letchworth and Welwyn, or old towns or large villages re-planned and extended so as to receive a large influx of population. These New Towns are to be planned as independent, or in some cases as 'satellite', centres of industry and population: that is to say, it is intended that most people who live in them shall work in them and most who work in them live in them—so that not merely a certain total of openings for employment, but a balance of jobs of different sorts to suit a diversified population is required. The New Towns are not to become at the outset separate administrative units, either under their Commissioners or under new Local Authorities of their own. The existing Local Authorities of the areas in which they are to be built are to assume in the first instance the responsibility of providing sanitary, educational and other public services; and the Commissioners are to act rather as Estate Development Companies for their entire areas, with power to provide Industrial Estates and to build factories for tenants, than as governing authorities. It seems to be intended that even house-building shall be undertaken mainly by the existing Local Authorities or by private developers rather than by the Commissioners themselves.

In a later section I shall have something to say in criticism of these arrangements. For the time being, I wish only to observe that this assumption of the power to create New Towns can, if extensive use is made of it, give the Central Government a considerable influence over the future distribution of industry and population. This power is obviously made greater by

the shortage of houses over the country as a whole; for, at any rate for some time to come, families will obviously be ready to settle wherever there are prospects of getting both a house and a job.

Lord Reith's Committee, on whose Report the New Towns Act was mainly based, proposed that there should be two ways of setting about the establishment of a New Town, and that the Central Government should be the responsible authority in some cases only, the sponsorship to rest in other cases with Local Authorities, acting either separately or in partnership. The Government, however, rejected the second of these alternatives and decided to take the whole task into its own hands. This decision may well have been correct, in the absence of any regional, as distinct from merely local, body capable of assuming the responsibility; but if the setting up of New Towns is to be undertaken on a large scale as a means to the dispersal of the populations of our overgrown cities, it would surely be very much better for this function to be taken over by some sort of regional agency and performed in close connection with the regional planning of land-use and of the development of urban building as a whole.

What I have in mind, as the function of Regional Planning, as distinct from Town and Country Planning in the narrower sense, is the drawing-up of master plans for the balanced development of extensive areas, including both towns and country, and for the distribution of industry and population within these areas. I do not suggest that the regional planning bodies should themselves execute in detail the plans drawn up by them; for detailed execution is better left in the hands of smaller authorities with closer knowledge of the local circumstances of each place. The main business of the regional bodies should be the devising of the plans, in relation to an overriding national plan drawn up centrally, but in close consultation with the Regions. The Regional Authorities would need to have power to secure the observance of their plans, where questions of regional policy were involved, subject to the proposals being in conformity with national planning policy. But there would be no need for them to have any part in the actual carrying out of plans within the competence of the lesser authorities, unless their participation were asked for. They would need to come in as executive

agents only where a plan was essentially regional rather than local in scope, or involved, as in the case of setting up a New Town intended to draw population from a wide area, direct regional action because of the non-existence of any local body able to take the task in hand from the outset.

The broad distinction between Regional and Local Planning is, then, that the former is mainly a matter of drawing up comprehensive schemes affecting the fortunes of a large number of localities, whereas the latter is mainly concerned with the application and detailed working out of these major plans to suit local circumstances. I shall have a good deal to say later about the areas which are best fitted to be designated as Regions for this purpose; but for the time being let us assume that the North-East Coast should constitute a Region. It would then be the business of the North-Eastern Regional Authority to draw up a draft master plan for the area under its jurisdiction. This plan would have to include estimates of the prospective population of the Region, apart from any special immigration or emigration, of the prospective distribution by age and sex and types of skill, and of the prospective local distribution in the various parts of the Region, apart from special measures designed to alter such local distribution in accordance with the regional plan. These estimates would include estimates of the number and broad character of the jobs needed throughout the Region to ensure full employment, and of any prospective shortages or surpluses of labour in the event of the plan being put into effect. Setting out from this initial survey, the Regional Authority would proceed to define the character of the industrial, commercial and agricultural developments which it regarded as necessary or desirable in order to secure a balanced economic and social structure throughout its area, with estimates of the capital needed, both for the directly economic part of the plan and for the parallel provision of the necessary houses, community buildings, sanitary services, schools, colleges, and other social investments required. It would include in its master plan such projects as it deemed desirable for the creation of New Towns and Industrial Estates, for the improvement of facilities for transport, and of ports, docks and harbours, and for the supply of such essential utilities as gas, electricity and water.

Of course, no Region could finally adopt a plan of this comprehensive kind without reference to what was being done and planned in other Regions. It has been, indeed, one of the most absurd features of much Town Planning hitherto that each major authority has drawn up its plans almost without reference to what was being projected elsewhere: with the natural consequence that the planned expansion of our big cities alone has postulated a total population far in excess of what is even possible, much less likely. The regional plans that I have in mind would be only drafts, subject to approval by a National Planning Authority, which would have to bring them into sensible relation one to another and to the population and resources of the country as a whole. They would, in practice, be drawn up from first to last in close consultation between the Regions and the Centre—and also, of course, between the Regional Authorities and the authorities of the smaller areas within each Region. Planning, in order to be realistic, must be always a matter involving close consultation both upwards and downwards at every stage, in such a way that the final plan emerges as the considered result of this consultation, if not of agreement among all the parties concerned. Agreement would be too much to hope for, where areas will inevitably be contending to get more than their fair shares of the most popular forms of development. But disagreements can at any rate be reduced by discussion; and, in major matters, the last word must of course rest with the National Planning Authority or, behind it, with the Government itself.

A Regional Plan of the type here envisaged, for the North-East Coast, would involve consideration of the prospects of the coal mines, the steel works, the shipyards, and all the main industries of the Region, and would therefore call for consultation with the National Coal Board and with the bodies, if any, responsible for the concerted development of the industries concerned. Regional Planning and Economic Planning would have to be brought together. No doubt, if the Coal Board, in pursuance of a national plan of its own, had already settled the future level of employment and the local distribution of jobs in the North-Eastern coalfields, the Regional Planning Authority, subject to its right to make representations to the Coal Board or beyond it to the Govern-

ment, would have to adjust its own plan to fit in with the plan of the Board. The degree of weight to be given to Regional and to Industrial planning bodies in making up the national development plan would have to be worked out in the light of practical experience; and the National Planning Authority would have to be so constituted as to take the views of both regional and industrial planners into account.

I am, of course, well aware that I have been implying a much more extensive system of national planning than at present exists in Great Britain on any permanent footing. National economic planning does exist at present to a considerable extent on an emergency basis, as a continuance of wartime control; and it is bound to continue in existence for some time yet, almost irrespective of the political complexion of the Government in power. The acute shortage of houses, the need to concentrate much effort on the expansion of export trade in order to pay for necessary imports, and the all-over scarcity of materials and of man-power make a largely controlled economy unavoidable. Moreover, I believe that many of the conditions which make planning unavoidable now are likely to persist. The need to maintain exports at a high level and to ensure that imported materials are put to proper use in the national interest will not pass away speedily, if at all; and the responsibility assumed by the Government for maintaining full employment means that there is a permanent commitment to bring about a balanced local as well as a balanced industrial demand for labour. It will not be fully seen how much permanent control over investment and over the location of industry the pledge to maintain full employment involves until Great Britain has to face a situation in which there is no longer an acute shortage of labour and a pent-up demand from consumers for making good arrears of supplies and from traders for renewing stocks—to say nothing of the possibility of a world economic crisis which, by cutting down sales of British goods abroad, may make it very difficult to pay for the imports of materials which are necessary for keeping our industries at work.

In face of these prospects I feel that I am justified in assuming the continuance of national planning to a fairly considerable extent. It does not, of course, follow that the controls which will be unavoidable in Great Britain's changed

situation in the economic world will be *called* 'National Planning', or that they will be systematically related either one to another or to Regional and Local Planning. There is indeed a great danger that this relation between the central and the regional and local aspects of planning will be inadequately allowed for, and that the national planning of particular industries, or even of industry as a whole, may be carried on with much too little concerted attention to regional and local needs. This is the danger inherent in a policy of entrusting the care of reorganized industries to a number of separate National Boards or Commissions, without any machinery for co-ordinating their policies and programmes, and of failing to match the national industrial machinery with any regional machinery for reviewing the needs of the different parts of the country on a wide and comprehensive basis.

The excuse for putting the main emphasis in economic reorganization on National Boards or Commissions, and for making provision for local and regional differentiation by means of decentralized agencies responsible to these national bodies, is that there exists at present no regional agency of which effective use can be made, and that the obstacles in the way of creating such an agency are too formidable to be faced at a time when urgent reforms are standing already in a long queue awaiting parliamentary attention. This argument has the greater force with politicians because they are acutely afraid of tackling the problem on account of its repercussions on the entire structure of Local Government, and of the certainty that the Local Authorities will fail to agree upon any common plan. The main purpose of this book is to combat this unfortunate attitude, which threatens to plunge Great Britain into an unduly bureaucratic method of planning and control. Most people, except the bureaucrats themselves, will agree that the only strong argument against a great extension of planned control in the economic field is that it is likely to lead to an undue growth of bureaucracy, for which decentralization within the bureaucratic system can furnish, at best, no more than a palliative. If we are to get planning with the minimum of bureaucracy, the amplification of Local Government structure must proceed side by side with the growth of central administrative functions.

At present, the only regional agencies concerned with economic and social planning, except the regional offices of the various departments and Boards which form part of the central administrative machine, are the unofficial Development Councils which have been formed in certain parts of the country—notably Lancashire, Cumberland, the North-East, South Wales, and Scotland—and a very few still more unofficial planning bodies, such as the West Midland Group. The Development Councils have no uniform pattern; but they commonly include a substantial representation from the Local Authorities of the areas covered, together with representatives of Chambers of Commerce, employers' associations, Trade Unions, and other locally influential bodies. They have no power to bind anybody; they are in effect only consultative agencies which have a wide knowledge of regional needs and possibilities and are in close touch with most of the major currents of opinion within their areas. Occasionally, as in the case of South Wales, they have done very valuable local survey work; and sometimes, as in Cumberland, they have worked in very closely with the official machinery set up for the encouragement of new enterprise in the 'Special'—now the 'Development'—Areas. Their existence has been thoroughly salutary; but they are clearly no substitute for fully recognized statutory bodies capable of playing a major part in the work of Regional Planning and of co-ordinating the activities of the Local Authorities within each regional area.

What I am urging, then, at its simplest and most rudimentary, is the setting up for every part of the country of representative Regional Planning Authorities, with the primary function of preparing comprehensive plans of regional development and of agreeing upon the form of these plans with the planning and controlling bodies connected with the Central Government. That the establishment of such bodies would involve, as a necessary complement, the creation of some form of Central Planning Authority, able to co-ordinate the activities of the various government departments and *ad hoc* Boards and Commissions dealing with economic planning on a national scale, is self-evident. But the need for such a national agency is so plain on other grounds that this constitutes by no means a valid objection. I do not care a rap what this national agency is *called*, provided that it is

given adequate authority to do its job; but I am convinced both that it ought to be created and that it ought to become the key institution in the formation of government economic policy, above all in connection with the maintenance of full and balanced employment.

The objections that will be raised to this proposal are familiar and, *on certain assumptions*, cogent. They amount in the main to this. High Civil Servants will work with zeal and loyalty for a particular department of State, or for an *ad hoc* Board or Commission with a defined and limited job to do; but there is nothing they hate so much as inter-departmental machinery endowed with any real executive or supra-departmental power. On this ground, the Civil Servants fought hard and long against the establishment of a wartime Ministry of Production and, when they could no longer prevent it, did their best to stop it from acquiring real powers. On this same ground, they resisted the setting up of a Ministry of Reconstruction; and on this same ground they fought down both the Beveridge proposal for a Ministry of Social Security and the parallel proposal for a Ministry to take full charge of Housing. In every case they argued that the proposed new agency would cut across the existing departments, and rejected it upon that basis; and in nearly every case, being the most powerful obstructionists in the country, they got their way.

They will fight harder still against any proposal for a comprehensive government agency to co-ordinate national planning, and hardest of all if the project is linked with a parallel project for setting up effective Regional Planning Authorities to co-operate with it. For they will see in any attempt to expand the scale of local government activities a threat to their own bureaucratic power; and this will alarm them even more than a super-department without such connections with Local Government. A co-ordinating Ministry, unsupported from the local end, they could hope to defeat and reduce to a minor rôle as they largely succeeded in defeating and reducing the Ministry of Production. A Central Planning Authority closely connected with Regional Planning Authorities and through them with the entire local government system would be a counterpoise to departmental bureaucracy which they would find it much more difficult to outwit.

Table 1  
THE SIX MAJOR PROVINCIAL CONURBATIONS

Central Town	Population 000's	Conurbation: No. of local Govt. Areas Included	Main Places Included	Wider Planning Area: Population 000's	Main Places Included	Still Wider Planning Area: Population 000's	Main Places Included
BIRMINGHAM	1,053	8	Smethwick W. Bromwich	2,150	Wolverhampton, Walsall	2,220	Tamworth Lichfield
LIVERPOOL	822	12	Birkenhead Wallasey Bootle Crosby	1,500	Warrington Widnes	1,650	St. Helens
MANCHESTER	727	36	Salford Stockport Stretford Altrincham	2,075	Oldham Bury	2,300	Bolton
NEWCASTLE	294	25	Gateshead Tynemouth St. Shields Jarrow	1,100	Rest of North- umberland	1,350	Sunderland
SHEFFIELD	522	14	Rotherham	1,500	Barnsley Wakefield Doncaster Pontefract	1,950	Chesterfield Mansfield Scunthorpe
LEEDS <sup>1</sup>	497	5	Pudsey	920	Bradford	1,120	Morley Dewsbury Batley

<sup>1</sup> NOTE.—The inclusion with the Leeds-Bradford area of the Halifax and Huddersfield areas, and of the northern part of the West Riding, would bring the total up to 1,700,000.

## THE GREAT PROVINCIAL CENTRES

IF there are to be Planning Regions, and Regional Planning Authorities, what ground are they to cover, and how are they to be appointed or elected? We have seen already that, in the chaotic growth of regional administrative machinery in connection with one particular service after another, Regions of all shapes and sizes have been marked out. Something was done in 1939 to co-ordinate the regional machinery of decentralization used by different government departments, in order to bring as many services as possible on to a common basis, which was used for the wartime Civil Defence Regions; but no attempt was, or could be, made to bring all official agencies into conformity with this structure, which did not in any case extend to bodies which did not form part of the government administrative machine. Broadly speaking, the structure adopted for the Civil Defence Regions was used for the services conducted or controlled by the Ministry of Home Security, the Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Assistance Board, the Ministry of Food, the Ministry of Supply in some of its activities, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, the Board of Trade (which was, however, tardy in setting up regional machinery), the Ministry of Health, and later by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. It was used very little by the Ministry of Education, and not much by the Ministry of Agriculture, which operated chiefly on a county basis. The service departments had their own Regions, which did not coincide with those introduced for purposes of Civil Defence.

The Civil Defence Regions, as units for decentralization of the work of such government departments and agencies as were either decentralized before 1939 or had to adopt measures of decentralization under war conditions, thus covered a wide range of services, and are entitled to consideration in connection with any plans for regional organization of Local Government; for there would be plain advantages in using the same Regions for the two distinct purposes of

devolution from the centre and building up from the localities. Nevertheless, I think no student of Local Government problems can be satisfied with the Civil Defence areas just as they stood as of suitable shape or size for the co-ordination of local activities or for purposes of regional planning. In England and Wales the Civil Defence Regions were 11 in number. Their regional capitals were at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Cambridge, London, Tunbridge Wells, Reading, Bristol and Cardiff.

We may begin by assuming that, from the standpoint of decentralizing the work of a number of government departments and other central agencies—excluding those which, for technical reasons, are bound to adopt special *ad hoc* regions of their own<sup>1</sup>—the arrangement adopted for the Civil Defence Regions cannot be very badly wrong. It would not do to attempt to break up the work of most departments into a substantially larger number of regional units because the larger the number of regional offices the less power would the central departments be prepared to devolve upon them. This is partly on account of the administrative difficulty of dealing with too many partly independent centres of administration, but even more because each regional office, if it is to carry the requisite authority and influence at headquarters, must be presided over by a Civil Servant of high enough standing to carry weight with the top administrators in Whitehall, and there are simply not enough Civil Servants of the requisite calibre and standing to go round more than a dozen or so Regions at most. We must, therefore, for the purposes of central devolution, not go beyond this number.

Even from this standpoint, some of the Civil Defence Regions are open to strong criticism. There may have been valid arguments, in 1939, for constituting a separate Region in the South-East, covering the counties of Kent and Sussex, because of the exceptional liability of these areas to invasion or at any rate to serious disturbance from military operations. But there can be no good reason for retaining the administrative separateness of this small area in time of peace. It belongs with Surrey and Hampshire, in a Southern Region which might well extend also, as the Southern Civil Defence Region did, to Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire; and it

<sup>1</sup> e.g. for coal, water, electricity, and for military purposes.



English Cities and Conurbations  
with Populations in excess of  
100,000.

- = 100,000–150,000
- = 150,000–200,000
- = 200,000–250,000
- ⊙ = 250,000–300,000

Figures in circles indicate multiples of 100,000.

The populations given are not for municipal areas, but an estimate for the areas of the conurbations.

might well, again like the Southern Civil Defence Region, have its administrative centre at Reading.

This would reduce the number of Central Government Regions from 11 to 10. Some would argue that the number ought to be brought back to 11 by splitting the Western Civil Defence Region, so as to make Devonshire and Cornwall on the one hand, and Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorsetshire on the other, into two separate Regions. This, however, would involve constituting, in Devon and Cornwall, a Region very much less populous than any of the others; for these two counties together have only about a million inhabitants, whereas all the other Regions exceed two millions, and most are considerably more populous than this. The reader is asked to bear in mind that we are for the present speaking only of decentralization of the work of the Central Government, and not of the regional arrangements most suitable for the wider purposes of Local Government and local representation.

The remaining criticism of the Civil Defence Regions is that they split Yorkshire, assigning the whole of the North Riding to the Northern Region, with its headquarters at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and that they group Cumberland and Westmorland—an area obviously too small to stand by itself—with Lancashire and Cheshire rather than with the North-East Coast. I feel sure that this way of treating Cumberland and Westmorland is a mistake. It may be that communications are easier for a part of the area from Manchester than from Newcastle-on-Tyne; but, if it is to be grouped at all, both its industrial structure and the habits and traditions of its people have much more in common with those of Northumbria than with the ways of Cottonopolis.

I should suggest, then, from the standpoint of central government devolution, the use of 10 Regions—including Wales as a single Region which might be given in many respects a greater independence than others, and excluding Scotland, with which I am not attempting to deal. These Regions could coincide broadly with the existing regional organization of the main civil departments, except that Cumberland and Westmorland would go with Northumberland and Durham; the North Riding would go with the rest of Yorkshire (except perhaps Middlesbrough and Cleveland); the South-Eastern Region would disappear; and, I should add

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the frontiers of the London Region, which I propose to discuss later, should be extended considerably.

These ten administrative Regions would be as follows, and would have the following headquarters, and pre-war populations roughly at the following levels:

Table 2  
REGIONS OF CENTRAL DEVOLUTION

<i>Name</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Approximate Pre-war Population 000's</i>
1. GREATER LONDON	London	9,000
2. SOUTHERN	Reading	4,400
3. WESTERN	Bristol	2,800
4. WEST MIDLAND	Birmingham	3,650
5. EAST MIDLAND	Nottingham	2,650
6. EASTERN	Cambridge	2,250
7. NORTH-WESTERN	Manchester	5,900
8. YORKSHIRE	Leeds	4,350
9. NORTHERN	Newcastle-on-Tyne	2,200
10. WALES (and MONMOUTHSHIRE)	Cardiff	2,500

In each of these Regions, every government department of which the business calls for substantial decentralization should maintain a regional office, under a Civil Service head of sufficient status and authority to be able to take important decisions without continual reference to headquarters on secondary issues. The only exceptions would be those called for by the exceptional technical conditions of a few particular services; and even in these instances the regional pattern would usually not need to be scrapped, but could be adapted where necessary to fit the special conditions.

With this structure of central administrative devolution, or something not far from it, in mind, we can now approach directly the problem of Regionalism in relation to the functions of Local Government. The requirements are in this case different, in that it is necessary to devise a structure to fit, not only administrative convenience, but also the sentiment of the people. Our aim, it must be borne in mind, is not to join the areas of existing Local Authorities together in merely

artificial groups but to find Regions that are capable of expressing a real feeling of community among the inhabitants of the areas included in them. We are trying to find independent focusing points for public sentiment, intermediate between the nation as a whole and the localities which are the units of its Local Government, in the hope of building up on this basis effective barriers against bureaucratic encroachment and of helping the local communities to take larger views, so as to be able to plan their ways of living on democratic lines, through agencies near enough to the individual citizen for him to feel that he has some real part in them, and at the same time large enough to be in a position to plan in matters in which successful planning is out of the question unless the areas of a number of Local Authorities can be embraced within the general directives of a common plan.

How big must Regions be, and how small can they be, so as to satisfy these requirements? Obviously, no simple answer is possible in terms either of population or of surface area. It would be absurd to attempt to reduce the crowded urbanized area of South Lancashire and the sparsely populated districts of North and Central Wales to a common rule. Our Regions, if they are discoverable at all, will need to be sought out one by one, by studying the lie of the country, from a human rather than a merely physical point of view, and by asking in each case what area will best serve the purpose in hand, and what can best be done to fit the doubtful districts, and those which do not seem to belong anywhere in particular, into a comprehensive regional map for the entire country.

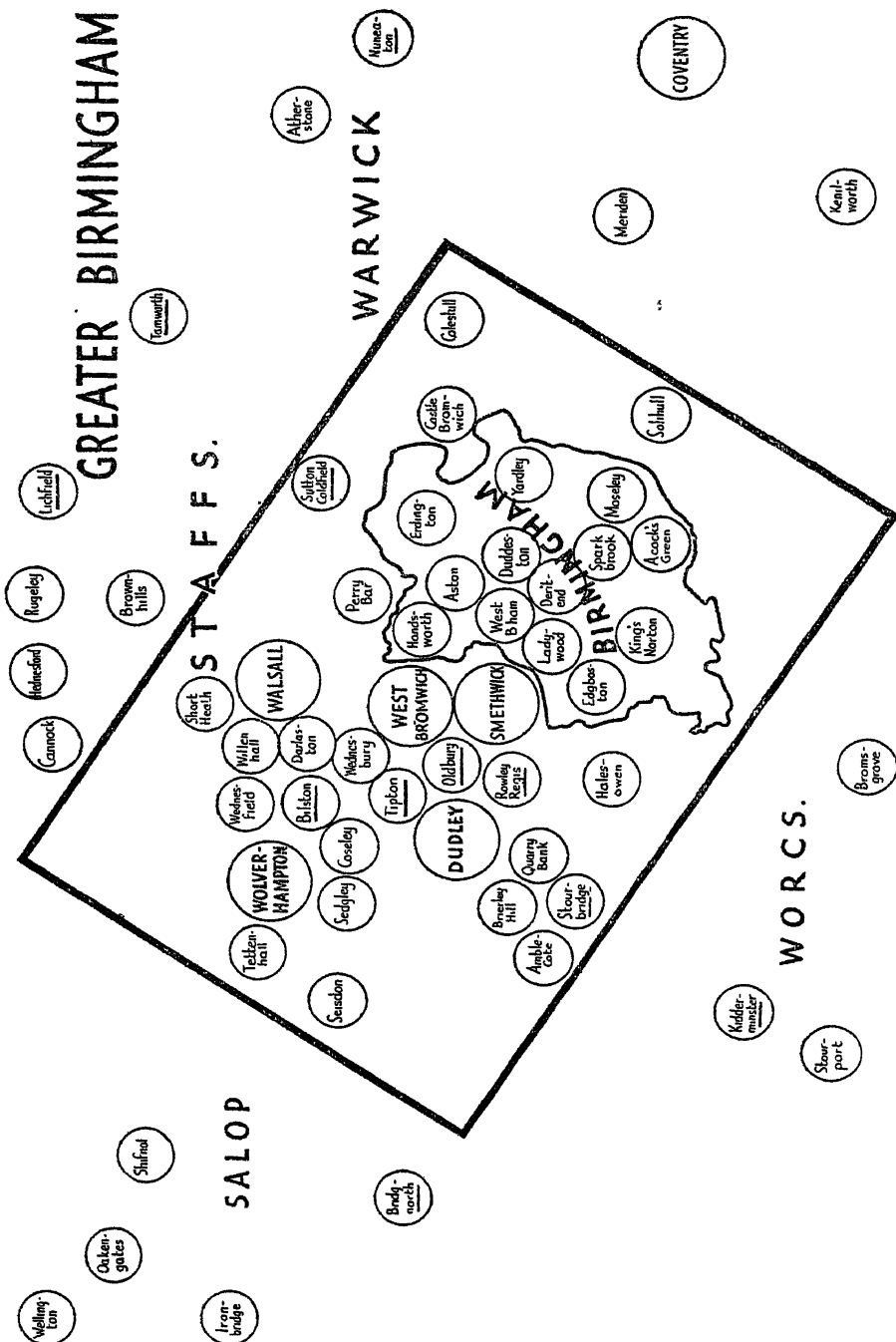
It will aid our search if we begin by assuming that the primary purpose of the Regions we are attempting to mark out is planning and co-ordination of local efforts, rather than the supersession of the smaller Local Authorities as executive bodies over any large field of administration. We can then see later on with what directly executive functions the Regional Authorities must, or could with advantage, be endowed, over and above the functions of planning, co-ordination, and keeping bureaucratic encroachments from the centre at bay. I shall accordingly define as the primary purpose of the proposed Regions the taking over of the functions at present entrusted to Joint Town and Country Planning Committees, but with wider powers to draw up plans to which the lesser

Town and Country Planning Authorities will be required to conform in drawing up and executing their more detailed local plans. I want, however, to go somewhat further than this and to make it an integral part of the duty of the Regional Authorities to draw up plans of economic development for their areas as well as plans of land-use, and to frame estimates of prospective population and proposals for its distribution within their borders as the necessary basis for a concerted regional policy in the field of housing and building development generally.

If this is the primary purpose in view, each Region must clearly include at the least the whole of any major conurbation, and not merely a part. It may be necessary in this respect to treat Greater London as an exception, but the whole problem of the Metropolis raises so many special problems and difficulties that the only sensible course is to leave it aside for the time being, and come back to it later as a special case. Greater London has, or had before the war, about 9,000,000 inhabitants—rather more or rather fewer according to the definition employed. No other conurbation in Great Britain, even on the widest reasonable definition, exceeds two and a half millions at most. The problem of Greater London is therefore of a quite different order from any of the others, and raises essentially different questions of scale and known capacity for community-making.

If we leave London aside for the present, there remain, in England and Wales, four unquestionable major 'conurbations', in the sense of great cities closely surrounded by suburbs and smaller towns which look towards them as centres, so that the whole area forms in effect a single working and residential group. I do not, of course, suggest that these conurbations have within them no local differences of major importance for Local Government, or that some of the districts included in them are not, in many respects, independent communities with a strong local life of their own. The essence of a 'conurbation', as distinct from a single great town, is that it does contain such lesser centres, and has grown together by bringing within its orbit a number of places which were previously separate, and do not lose their original character by becoming elements in a larger whole. These smaller places, however, though they do not necessarily lose

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their identities (as some of them in fact do) are all greatly affected by coming within the sphere of influence of the larger group centred upon the big city. Many people work in one part of the 'conurban' area and live in another: there is much movement of households from one place to another within the 'conurban' limits; and almost every inhabitant of the conurbation looks to the central districts of the main city for quite a number of services, pretty much as the villager looks to the market town.

The four unquestionable major conurbations mentioned in the preceding paragraph are centred respectively on Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Of these four cities, as they at present exist for purposes of Local Government, only one—Birmingham—has a population of more than a million. Liverpool exceeds 800,000, and Manchester 700,000; whereas Newcastle-on-Tyne is very much smaller, with fewer than 300,000. Birmingham owes its pride of place chiefly to having been able more easily than the others to secure extensions of its municipal boundaries, except on its western side. On that side it joins on immediately to other considerable towns which form part of a practically continuous urban area extending into the Black Country. But on the other three sides it has found plenty of room for growth and has been able to take in large tracts of open country which are by no means yet fully built over. The other three central 'conurban' cities are all much more hemmed in, and have met with much greater obstructions to their attempts to expand their municipal territory. In their case the population of the main city gives no indication at all of the size of the total population that looks towards them as the centres of its work-and-play activity, taken as a whole, and it is hard to know how many people should be regarded as belonging to the conurbations because by the time one gets near their periphery, rival centres of attraction are beginning, especially in the case of the Manchester Region, to exercise an alternative pull.

In none of the four cases is it possible to define the 'conurban' area in such a way that the definition will not be hotly disputed. I mean the *definition*; for of course even where that is not in dispute areas which unquestionably form part of a conurbation may hotly resist inclusion within the municipal

limits of its main city. Take first the case of Birmingham, which is the simplest of the four, in the sense, not that there is no dispute, but that the dispute can be simply stated. I think even the narrowest definition of the Birmingham conurbation must include in it the two County Boroughs of Smethwick and West Bromwich, which are rammed right into its western side. With West Bromwich goes Wednesbury; and these three add a population of roughly 195,000 to Birmingham's own 1,053,000. Add to these, as we can hardly help doing, Sutton Coldfield to the north-east, Perry Bar to the north, Solihull to the south-east, and Castle Bromwich and Coleshill to the east, with a part of the Rural District of Meriden into which suburban building has already extended, and we get for Greater Birmingham a minimum 'conurban' population of 1,350,000.

It is possible to stop at this point; but there is in truth no real frontier where Smethwick, West Bromwich and Wednesbury end and other municipal areas begin. Tipton, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Rowley Regis, Brierley Hill, Oldbury and Stourbridge—to name only the bigger places—all form parts of what is virtually a single built-up area, though there are tracts of unbuilt-on land within it—extending from Staffordshire into Worcestershire and from a considerable way north-west to a considerable way south-west of the 'conurban' area already defined. This further area, which is unquestionably 'conurban', though it may be disputed whether it belongs to the Birmingham conurbation, contains nearly 800,000 inhabitants; and its inclusion in the Greater Birmingham total would bring the 'conurban' population up to well over two millions. If the area round Lichfield and Tamworth, which is already to a great extent within the Birmingham orbit, were included, another 70,000 or so would be added, and we should get a 'conurban' total of about 2,200,000. If, on the other hand, we regard the 'Black Country' as constituting a separate, though closely related conurbation, and leave the Lichfield-Tamworth area outside the 'conurban' limits, we get two major conurbations, one of well over a million and a quarter, and the other of more than three-quarters of a million—with an evident need for close consultation between them in any matter of regional planning policy.

A still wider conception of the Birmingham conurbation might, of course, include Coventry to the south-east, with the places which are becoming closely connected with it. This would add at least another quarter of a million. But Coventry is still separated from Birmingham by enough open country to be clearly marked off from it, though in some respects its inhabitants are served by Birmingham as a centre for social as well as business doings. Similarly, Kidderminster and Stourport, to the south-west, could be brought in; but they, like Coventry, stand too much apart from the main 'conurban' area to be regarded as clearly within its orbit.

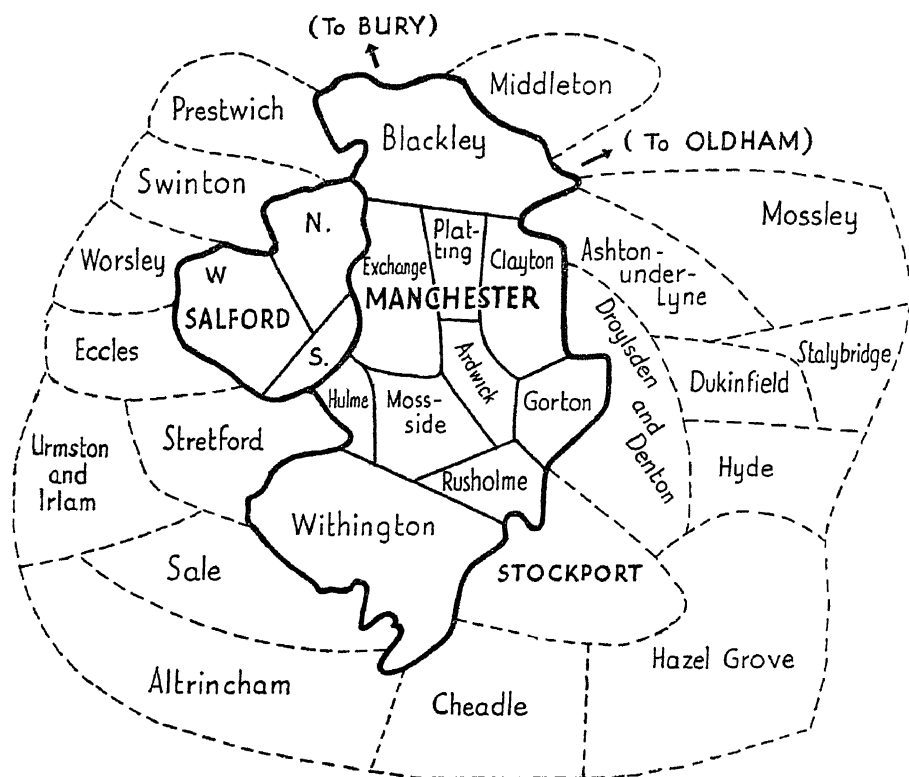
The accompanying Map (on page 90) will serve to illustrate what has been said in the foregoing paragraphs, though some of its features will be explained only later, when we are dealing more directly with problems of 'conurban' municipal government.

After Birmingham, Liverpool presents the least complex case. The Merseyside conurbation is quite different in character from that of Greater Birmingham, because it lies on both sides of the Mersey estuary. Its main centre, Liverpool itself, has over 800,000 people within its municipal boundaries. Birkenhead, the chief place south of the estuary, has over 140,000, and Wallasey, which joins right on to Birkenhead, has 94,000. Beyond them lies Hoylake, and behind them are the residential areas of the Wirral Peninsula. To the north of the Mersey estuary, Liverpool itself runs into Bootle, which lies north of it along the sea coast, and into the inland working-class area of Litherland behind it; and north of these again lies the Borough of Crosby, with no open country between. Inland to the east from Liverpool, the urban area extends almost unbroken to Prescott, and farther south, along the estuary, some way past Garston. Beyond these areas lie St. Helen's, reaching out westwards towards Prescott, and Widnes and Warrington, farther up the Mersey. But these three, and the smaller places immediately round them, can hardly be regarded as belonging to the Merseyside conurbation save in a considerably extended sense. Near them, we are already in the South Lancashire coalfield, which has its main centre at Wigan.

The Merseyside conurbation, in its narrower definition, is thus in two parts, one in Lancashire and the other in Cheshire.

# GREATER MANCHESTER:

Rough Sketch Map of Suggested Areas



The larger, Lancashire division, lying north of the Mersey, includes Liverpool, Bootle, Litherland, Crosby, Prescott and Huyton, and has just about a million inhabitants. The smaller, south of the estuary, includes Birkenhead, Wallasey, Bebington, Hoylake, and at any rate a part of the Urban Districts of Neston and the Wirral. If these are included, the Cheshire sector of the conurbation has about 325,000 people: if they are left out, about 300,000. Thus, the conurbation as a whole numbers at least 1,300,000.

If we were to go wider, so as to include the waterside areas farther up the Mersey, we should have to add about another 200,000 for Warrington, Widnes, Runcorn, and a number of much smaller places near them, and if we further added St. Helens and its immediate satellites, this would involve about 150,000 more. Thus, the Merseyside conurbation includes, on a narrow definition, upwards of a million and a quarter inhabitants, and on a wider definition about 1,650,000.

Manchester presents greater difficulties, because it is even harder to know where to stop. Manchester itself, as at present defined for municipal purposes, is an irregular oblong with its main length running north and south. Close up against it to the west, about halfway down, is Salford, also a County Borough, parts of which lie quite close to Manchester's central business district. Close up against it to the south-east is another County Borough, Stockport, lying beyond the largely residential districts of Rusholme and Withington, which are already parts of Manchester in a municipal sense. Of these two, Salford, whatever its city fathers may pretend, is so much a part of Manchester that it is entirely unrealistic to think of them except as a single great town. Stockport is in a different position; for, though it adjoins municipal Manchester, it is far enough away from the central district of its larger neighbour and has a distinctive enough character to be regarded as still a town 'on its own'—not, of course, as one independent of Manchester, but as falling within Manchester's orbit rather than as being fully a part of it.

To the south, on the Cheshire side, bordering on Stockport and on Withington, are the most open areas in the neighbourhood of Manchester; and here, in pleasant country, has been the greatest growth of middle-class residential and dormitory districts beyond the municipal boundaries. Here too is

Wythenshawe, Manchester's municipal experiment in building something between a satellite suburb and a satellite town. South of Stockport lie Cheadle, Hazel Grove, Handforth, Wilmslow, and a number of smaller places whose better-off inhabitants have close connections with Manchester or with Stockport. Farther north, to the west of Stockport, lie Marple, Bredbury and Compstall, and a still largely open tract between this group and Denton and Hyde, where the industrial area begins. Farther west than all these, to the south-west of Withington, lies a more populous group of largely residential districts, still in country surroundings—Sale, Altrincham, Hale, Bowdon, and a number of smaller places, with Knutsford—Mrs. Gaskell's 'Cranford'—away still farther to the south. These are the main directions to which further expansion of Greater Manchester's built-up area, if it occurs, is bound to be directed; for, as we shall see, elsewhere there is little room left.

To the east, beyond Gorton, which is municipal Manchester's most easterly area, lie a number of small and middle-sized industrial towns with a longish history behind them. These include Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, Dukinfield and Hyde, which are all Boroughs, and the Urban Districts of Denton, Droylsden and Audenshaw—the last-named right on the Manchester municipal frontier. A little farther north, and farther away, is another Borough, Mossley; but between it and Manchester lies the still partly open Rural District of Limehurst. Most of this is hilly country, and to the north of it lies an area which looks to Oldham, rather than to Manchester, as its centre.

Oldham, 7 miles away from the centre of Manchester to the north-east, belongs essentially to the great South-East Lancashire urban complex, but hardly to the Manchester conurbation, save in a very extended sense. Municipal Manchester here terminates in the districts which go, for parliamentary purposes, by the name of Blackley; and immediately beyond the municipal boundaries one gets into an area that seems to be more closely related to Oldham than to Manchester. Middleton, for example, has closer historical associations with the Oldham than with the Manchester district.

Farther west, still to the north of Blackley, lie areas which

run in to Bury, yet another County Borough standing in much the same relation to Manchester as Oldham; and beyond Bury to the west lies Bolton, which must be regarded as still farther beyond the Manchester radius. Prestwich, a considerable district to the south and south-west of Bury and to the south-east of Bolton, borders partly on Blackley and partly on Salford; and to the south-west of Prestwich, bordering on Salford, lie the Boroughs of Swinton and Eccles and the Urban District of Worsley, all closely related, not so much to Salford as to the combined central area which includes parts of both Manchester and Salford. South of these again comes Stretford, bordering on both Salford and on Hulme and Withington, which are parts of municipal Manchester; and beyond Stretford lie Urmston and Irlam and other areas north of the Mersey—all essentially parts of Greater Manchester and inhabited by people who look to Manchester as their metropolis. Beyond these we come again, across the Mersey, to the residential extensions of Greater Manchester into Northern Cheshire.

Thus, to the north, Manchester comes to an end in a no-man's land which shades off into the outlying districts connected with Oldham, Bury and Bolton. To the west it shades off into the coalfield round Leigh and farther south into the outskirts of the Warrington area. To the east it gives place to a hilly country dotted with lesser industrial towns of which Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge are the largest. To the south and to the south-east alone does it spread out, beyond Stockport and Withington, into open country in which there are no large rival towns to act as centres for the major activities of urban life.

Where are we to set the limits of this Greater Manchester, from the planning standpoint from which we are at present approaching the question? As a minimum, from this point of view, it is clearly necessary to treat the three County Boroughs of Manchester, Salford and Stockport as a single unit. Their populations can be put respectively at 728,000, 196,000 and 136,000, giving a combined total of 1,060,000, without any of the areas beyond their municipal limits. On the western side I think it is clearly necessary to bring in Prestwich, Swinton, Worsley, Eccles, Stretford, Urmston and Irlam, with a combined population of about 250,000. To

the east, I should similarly bring in Ashton-under-Lyne, Mossley, Audenshaw, Denton, Droylsden, in Lancashire, with the Rural District of Limehurst and perhaps Lees, which might, however, go better with Oldham. Without Lees, this would add another 125,000 or more. To this it is necessary to add the neighbouring Cheshire industrial towns of Stalybridge, Dukinfield, Hyde and Longdendale, and the Rural District of Tintwistle—a further total of about 80,000. Finally, to the south we must bring in a considerable area of Cheshire—from Bredbury and Romiley and Marple and Hazel Grove and the Rural District of Disley on the east to Cheadle, Handforth, Wilmslow and Alderley Edge in the centre, and Sale, Altrincham, Hale, Bowden and Bucklow, and perhaps even Knutsford, on the west. These areas contain about another 200,000 people.

This combined Region, with no extensions beyond the Manchester municipal boundary to the north, is inhabited by about 1,700,000 persons, and can be regarded as the minimum area over which it is practicable for effective regional, as distinct from merely local, planning to be done.

A wider regional conception would have to bring in Oldham and Bury and the smaller places round them, and perhaps Bolton as well. Oldham and Bury, with their outliers, would involve a further population of about 375,000: the Bolton area would add another 225,000. Thus, the Region, in its wider interpretation, would have a total of 2,300,000 inhabitants.

The fourth great conurbation—Tyneside—resembles the Merseyside conurbation in occupying the two banks of a river. Its main centre, Newcastle-on-Tyne, is small in comparison with Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, having fewer than 300,000 people. To the south of it, across the bridges, in Durham County, lies Gateshead, once a mere outpost governed by the Newcastle Corporation, but now an independent County Borough with 116,000 inhabitants. North of the Tyne a continuously built-up area stretches from Newcastle through Wallsend to the combined County Borough of Tynemouth and North Shields; and on the south bank there is a similar line of towns from Gateshead through Jarrow to South Shields. Up the river lie Newburn on the north side, above Newcastle, and on the south bank Blaydon and a number of smaller places shading off into the coalfield

round Consett. On the Northumberland coast, north of Tynemouth, lie the holiday resorts of Whitley Bay and the old fishing village of Cullercoats, and beyond these the largely residential district round Seaton Delaval and Monkseaton, the small ports of Blyth and, farther north, Newbiggin, with the famous colliery of Ashington lying a little inland. Farther inland behind this area is the old town of Morpeth, intimately connected with the coalfield, which sent one of the first workmen Members to Parliament as early as 1874. To the west of Newcastle lie Gosforth and a district partly residential and partly given up to collieries; and then we come round again to Newburn and to the Tyne.

South of the river, behind the line of riparian towns, lie the main centres of the North Durham coalfield—Consett, Chester-le-Street, Houghton-le-Spring, Washington, and the pits inland from Sunderland. On the Durham coast, a few miles south of South Shields, lies Sunderland itself, essentially a coal port, with close connections with the coalfields of Central Durham. All this area lies definitely outside the Tyneside conurbation, though it has links with it. Tyneside, in effect, stops with the line of riverside towns south of the river, but extends much farther from the Tyne into Northumberland. Along the sea-coast it goes at least as far as Blyth, and perhaps to Newbiggin. Inland its frontier can be drawn narrowly, to exclude Morpeth, or more amply, to include it. To the west the choice is open—to stop a few miles beyond Gosforth and Newburn, or to take in Prudhoe and Corbridge, and perhaps even Hexham.

Beyond this area in its wider conception there is to the west and north only open country, with no considerable centre of population anywhere in the rest of the County of Northumberland. From the standpoint of local government reorganization this constitutes a serious problem; for if the great conurbation centred upon Newcastle were to be made into a unified area of local administration and cut off from the rest of the county, it would be exceedingly difficult to maintain even a tolerable minimum of essential services in the rural areas, which are devoid of collieries as well as of other industrial development. From the standpoint of planning alone this complication does not necessarily arise, and we may attempt to define the Tyneside conurbation without regard to it.

We begin, then, with Newcastle-on-Tyne's 294,000 and Gateshead's 116,000. To these we must add the Northumberland riverside towns of Wallsend and Tynemouth—another 112,000, and their cross-river counterparts—Jarrow, Hebburn, and South Shields—another 164,000. Blaydon and its neighbours, to the west of Gateshead, and Felling, Whickham and Washington, to the south and east of it, add another 90,000. North of the Tyne, Gosforth, and Newburn to the west, bring in 40,000, or, with Prudhoe, 50,000. Long Benton and Bedlingtonshire, north of Newcastle, add 50,000 more, and the Rural District of Castle Ward another 12,000. Whitley Bay, Monkseaton and Blyth, on or near the coast, account for 90,000; and if we add Morpeth, Ashington, and Newbiggin, with the surrounding rural area, we get yet another 65,000.

We thus arrive, for the entire conurbation, at a population of about a million—from 970,000 to 1,040,000, according to the precise limits which we elect to assign. The effect is to leave the remainder of Northumberland, even including Berwick-on-Tweed, with a maximum of about 100,000 inhabitants—and with many fewer if the conurbation is widely drawn. It may be best, in these circumstances, to include the whole of Northumberland—but not, of course, the whole of Durham—in the one planning Region, with the rest of the Tyneside conurbation. The alternative would be to assign the residue of Northumberland, for planning purposes, to a Northern Region including Cumberland and Westmorland and, perhaps, some of the rural part of North Yorkshire.

From these four obvious major conurbations—obvious as conurbations with definite big cities as their centres—we must now turn to the much more difficult problems of the West Riding of Yorkshire. In this area are two very large towns—Sheffield with 522,000 and Leeds with 497,000 inhabitants within the present municipal limits—surrounded by a great number of lesser towns of all sorts and sizes, from Bradford, with 288,000, close to Leeds, Huddersfield with 126,000, York with 102,000, and Halifax, with 98,000, down to small industrial towns with only a few thousand people. These towns, lying for the most part in hilly country and often in folds or valleys between high hills which hold them apart, constitute a practically uninterrupted series of interconnected urban settlements across the southern part of the great county

of Yorkshire, but are so spaced as to leave much more open land for farming than survives in the industrial belt of Lancashire. Through a part of the area runs a great coalfield, to the south and west of the woollen textile district centred upon Leeds, Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield; and this coalfield extends beyond Yorkshire into Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire to the south. New developments round Doncaster have shifted the main growth of the coalfield eastwards, away from its old centre at Barnsley; and the iron and steel industries of Sheffield and Rotherham in the south of the West Riding are closely connected with the more easterly iron districts of Scunthorpe and Frodingham, over the Lincolnshire border.

On the western side, the Yorkshire industrial area runs up to the borders of Lancashire, and farther south to those of Derbyshire, but for the most part with a sparsely populated area of hill-land keeping them apart. They run nearly into each other at a few points—at Barnoldswick in the north, at Todmorden in the centre, and at Saddleworth farther south; but farther still to the south they are held well apart by the hills between Penistone and Glossop. To the north-west, the industrial district is bounded by Skipton—a textile centre up on the moors—and east of Skipton the whole northern part of the West Riding is moorland and farming country stretching away to Ripon and towards York, which lies on the frontier between the West Riding and the further large agricultural belt of the North Riding, continuous with rural Westmorland, Cumberland and West Durham beyond the coalfields. To the east a mainly rural area stretches away across the East Riding to the great port of Hull, upon the Humber; and south of the Humber lies the partly industrial area of North Lincolnshire, with Grimsby and Immingham beyond it on the Lincolnshire coast. To the south of the Sheffield group of towns lie the coalfield areas of Chesterfield in Derbyshire and Mansfield in Nottinghamshire; and these complete the circle round again to the hills west of Sheffield and Penistone, among which lies some of the best walking country in England and the great water-supply system of the Derwent Valley.

The West Riding industrial area as a whole is thus reasonably well defined; nor is there any doubt—except in the

minds of Bradford men, or perhaps of historically-minded denizens of ancient York—which are its two leading cities. Leeds, in the north-east of the area, and Sheffield in the south, stand pre-eminent in population and in industrial importance. Sheffield, indeed, is clearly the centre of a South Yorkshire conurbation which includes Rotherham, Rawmarsh, and Mexborough, and a considerable number of smaller places, even without crossing the county boundary into Lincolnshire, or Nottinghamshire, or Derbyshire. The four places named, without any of their smaller neighbours, contain a population of about 640,000, and with these lesser places the total comes up to about 800,000, all in South Yorkshire, and within a fairly narrow semi-circle round Sheffield itself. To the north of the area thus defined lie the main coalfield areas round Barnsley and Doncaster; and beyond these the coalfield extends north to Wakefield, Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford—all this coalfield belt lying to the south and east of the textile districts, and cutting them off sharply from the 'South Riding', pivoted upon Sheffield. In this intervening area, including its northernmost extension round Normanton and Pontefract, live about 700,000 persons, with coal-mining as the principal, but by no means the only, occupation.

South of the Yorkshire border and to the east of it the coal and iron districts centred upon Chesterfield, Mansfield and Scunthorpe contain about 450,000 persons. Thus the three 'Regions' combined—which Professor Fawcett in one of his plans of regional reorganization proposed to group into a new 'Peak' Province—add up to a total of not far short of two millions. On the narrower view, they constitute one conurbation, based on Sheffield, numbering about 800,000, and two coalfield Regions lying north and south of the conurbation, with 700,000 and 450,000 inhabitants respectively.

The position in the central industrial area of the West Riding is very much more complicated, for here Leeds, with its nearly 500,000 people, or, if we add its immediate satellites—Pudsey, Garforth, Horsforth and Rothwell—with upwards of 570,000, lies close to Bradford, with 288,000, or with its satellites—Shipley, Baildon, Bingley and Denholme—over 350,000. Close again to Leeds, on the southern side, is a second group of mainly textile towns and villages—Dewsbury, Morley, Batley, Spenborough, Heckmondwike, and Mirfield

—with a combined population of about 190,000; and both this area and the Bradford area are near neighbours of a further group to the west, centering upon Halifax, and extending loosely far west towards Todmorden almost on the Lancashire border.

In this Greater Halifax area are upwards of 200,000 people; and south of it, so that it is difficult to draw any clear line, lies a further group of textile towns and villages, round Huddersfield, and away to the south-west through Holmfirth and as far as Saddleworth, again on the county border. In this area are another 200,000 inhabitants. Finally, to the north-west of this Bradford area lie more textile and engineering towns, in hill country with much more open land—Keighley, Otley and faraway Skipton and Barnoldswick, in the midst of country that is purely rural or open moor. These account for at least another 150,000—or about 190,000 if the entire sparsely populated area stretching away towards the frontiers of the West Riding is taken in.

We have, then, in the whole of this textile and engineering region, with large rural tracts interspersed, a population of about 1,700,000, excluding the north-eastern parts of the West Riding round Ripon, Harrogate, and Tadcaster, with upwards of 100,000. Clearly this wider Region does not constitute a 'conurbation', in any appropriate sense of the word. It is rather a whole series of big towns, little towns, and villages, in every sort of relation from that of satellites to that of independent urban or 'conurban' centres. Leeds and Bradford stand out as the two main 'conurban' centres; but Huddersfield and Halifax and Dewsbury can also claim to be independent centres of substantial importance. For some purposes—notably for any sort of planning of the location of industry and distribution of population—the whole area evidently needs to act together, or at any rate with constant and close consultation between its parts. For other purposes, it needs much less collaboration, because for the most part its urbanization is less close and continuous than that of the other areas we have so far considered. This, however, does not apply to the relations between the two great neighbours, Leeds and Bradford, which evidently ought—whether they will or no—to do all their planning in concert, and to regard themselves as forming the twin nuclei of a single

conurbation which should be envisaged as extending also, through Morley and Batley, at least as far as Dewsbury and Spenborough.

The six urban aggregations discussed in the preceding pages—counting Leeds and Bradford for the moment as belonging to the same group—are very much bigger than any others in England and Wales. There are six other towns in England which have more than a quarter of a million people within their existing municipal frontiers; but none of them is the centre for a continuous urban area comparable in extent with those so far described. The biggest town left over is Bristol, with about 420,000 inhabitants. The inclusion of suburban and satellite areas outside the municipal limits would bring the total up to a little over half a million, but to no more. Next in populousness is Hull, with about 320,000; but here again are no big centres outside the city limits, and the total for Greater Hull is only about 420,000 at most, even with the inclusion of Beverley and of a considerable rural area. Then comes Nottingham, with nearly 280,000 people in the existing Borough and a large number round about in suburbs and small separate industrial towns, such as Hucknall and Beeston and Stapleford. The inclusion of these neighbours and satellites would bring the total population of Greater Nottingham up to about 480,000. Stoke-on-Trent has a municipal population of about 270,000, and is already a conurbation formed by the amalgamation of a number of previously independent towns. The inclusion of its near neighbour, Newcastle-under-Lyme, with its attached Rural District, and of Kidsgrove, would bring the total up to 366,000; and if a wider sweep were taken, so as to bring in Leek, Cheadle, and Biddulph, about 75,000 would be added, making a total of 440,000. Leicester, with 263,000, is the next biggest, and has populous suburbs outside its limits, as well as industrial close neighbours, such as Hinckley, and a large population, partly industrial, in the surrounding Rural Districts. The inclusion of all these might bring the population of a Greater Leicester area up to 400,000, but no more. Portsmouth, with 260,000, is nearly as big as Leicester, and has a close neighbour in Gosport, with about 48,000; and the inclusion of Fareham and Havant would add another 60,000, bringing the total to nearly 370,000.

# THE GREAT PROVINCIAL CENTRES

Table 3

## LESSER CONURBATIONS AND CITIES

<i>Central Town</i>	<i>Population 000's</i>	<i>Conurbation: No. of L.G. Areas Included</i>	<i>Population (approx.) 000's</i>
ENGLAND			
Bristol	419	6	500
Nottingham	279	10	480
Stoke-on-Trent	270	8	440
Hull	318	9	420
Leicester	263	8	400
Portsmouth	260	4	370
Middlesbrough*	140	12	360
Bradford	287	5	350
Derby	137	5	260
Coventry	220	2	250
Plymouth	223	4	250
Sunderland	182	4	250
Southampton	181	5	250
West Ham	250	1	250
Croydon	244	1	244
Brighton	146	5	240
Blackpool	128	7	230
Oldham	124	6	230
Bolton	168	6	220
Doncaster	72	7	220
Huddersfield	126	6	200
Halifax	97	8	200
Dewsbury	53	6	190
Walsall	107	5	175-200
Wolverhampton	147	3	175-200
Norwich	121	4	175
Reading	100	6	175
Medway Towns	—	4	165
WALES			
Cardiff	225	4	300
Swansea	160	4	240

\* If the Hartlepoons and Darlington are included with Middlesbrough, the total 'conurban' population is increased to 538.

Besides the fourteen towns already mentioned—London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford, Bristol, Nottingham, Hull, Leicester, Stoke-on-Trent, and Portsmouth—there are only two English towns with more than a quarter of a million people within

their municipal boundaries. These two are West Ham and Croydon, which both belong undeniably to the conurbation of Greater London. Only two more in England, and one in Wales—Cardiff—exceed 200,000. Of these Plymouth has about 224,000 inhabitants, and is, like Stoke, a conurbation in itself, formed by the amalgamation of previously independent towns. The inclusion of the suburban and country fringe would add only about 27,000, unless the ring were widened to take in Saltash and Torpoint, across the water in Cornwall. Even with these the Greater Plymouth total would be under a quarter of a million. Coventry has about 220,000, and the area round it has filled up rapidly during the war; but on the pre-war basis we are using, the inclusion of its immediate satellites and of a rural belt would leave it with not more than a quarter of a million people at most. Finally, Cardiff, the largest of the Welsh cities, has about 225,000, or with Barry, Penarth and other neighbouring places, not far short of 300,000.

There are, however, a number of lesser conurbations, or major centres, which deserve a mention even though their principal town has a smaller population within its present municipal limits. Middlesbrough has only 140,000 municipal inhabitants; but it forms one urban region with Stockton-on-Tees, on the Durham side of the estuary, and the two, together with a number of smaller neighbours, have a combined population of 364,000. If a wider view is taken, so as to bring in the neighbouring centres of Darlington and the Hartlepoons, the total is increased to nearly 540,000. Sunderland and Southampton both have municipal populations of about 180,000, but are the centres of urban areas with total populations of about a quarter of a million. Bolton, with nearly 170,000 within its municipal borders, is a centre for at least 220,000. Derby, with fewer than 130,000, has about as many more round it in smaller places which look towards it as their point of focus. Brighton, with Hove and some smaller neighbours, expands from under 150,000 to about 240,000. Oldham's 125,000 becomes 230,000 if the smaller places close to it and linked to it by close economic ties are brought into the count. Doncaster, though it has but 73,000 inhabitants, is a rapidly growing centre, and its environs, together with the coalfield area round it, raise its effective district population to about 220,000. Blackpool, with its

near neighbours along the coast, rises similarly from 128,000 to about 230,000.

Besides these, Wolverhampton, with 147,000 people, and Walsall, with 108,000, have 'conurban' populations of between 175,000 and 200,000 each, according to where the line is drawn between them: or they can be regarded as a single conurbation of 270,000, or even, as we have seen, as only part of a still larger conurbation of the 'Black Country'. Norwich, with 122,000, and Reading, with 100,000, can both be regarded as points of focus for populations of 175,000 or more. And the Medway towns, each small by itself, form a genuine conurbation with about 165,000 inhabitants. Finally, in Wales, Swansea has about 160,000 people, and its neighbours, Neath and Port Talbot, add 75,000 more.

It would, of course, be possible to prolong this list by bringing in a number of smaller but still considerable places which serve as local 'capitals' for a surrounding area, or are even true conurbations brought into existence by the growing together of previously independent settlements. But the purpose of this chapter is not to give a comprehensive account of English urban structure, as contrasted with the local government areas through which its affairs are administered, but only to pick out certain major examples of areas which, for the purpose of any effective planning covering the prospects and distribution of population, the location and balancing of industries and openings for employment, and the right placing of new housing development either in new towns or by way of additions to those already in being, must be considered as units. In some of the cases cited, where it is a question of no more than a considerable town and its suburbs and surrounding rural belt, it may seem as if all the difficulties could be met by a simple process of extending the limits of the municipality to correspond with modern realities. This may indeed be in some instances the right solution, though it cannot be accepted without careful consideration of its effects on the areas which are left beyond the enlarged frontiers—for these may be both too small and too poor by themselves, and too difficult to amalgamate with other areas, for their inhabitants to view the prospect with anything less than dismay.

Whatever may be felt about this, it is abundantly clear

that in most of the areas considered in this chapter the solution of amalgamation into single unified administrative areas, of the County Borough type, responsible for the entire range of local government services, is simply out of the question. They are too big for this, not merely in population but in area—too big, and, even more, too diverse. What they need is not a general unification of local government services throughout their length and breadth, but more effective means than exist at present for concerted planning and for action on the basis of the concerted plans. Some degree of administrative unification may also be desirable, within a limited number of fields—we shall be coming back to that question very soon. So far, all that I have sought to establish is that there exists a number of great—some of them, very great—urban areas, or conurbations, which have common needs that are not met under the present system of Local Government, and must be met if we intend to embark on real planning of our industrial and demographic future, and to do so without falling under the sway of a central bureaucracy that, however honest and zealous it may be, will be fatally unable to represent the real needs and wishes of the people.

## CHAPTER VI

### RURAL AND URBAN PATTERNS

THE preceding chapter was given up entirely to a discussion of the problems of planning in large urban communities which extend beyond the existing frontiers of Local Government, so as to involve a number—sometimes a quite considerable number—of separate Local Authorities. Great Britain, however, highly urbanized as it is, does not consist entirely of large or even of middle-sized towns—much less of conurbations and great stretches of mainly urbanized country, such as are found round London, in South Lancashire, and in the southern and central part of the West Riding. The six great conurbations described in the preceding chapter have, in the narrower of the definitions there given to them, fewer than seven million inhabitants. Greater London, on a similar definition, has about nine millions. The next eight big towns and conurbations, with from 500,000 to 350,000 people, account for about another three and a quarter millions. The remaining eighteen, down to the level of 165,000, contain rather less than another four millions. Thus, all these towns and conurbations together have about 23 million inhabitants, out of a total population of about 37 millions. There remain about 14 millions who are living either in smaller towns, or in country districts that have not become virtual suburbs of the great towns and conurbations.

Of these remaining people, about 700,000 live within the existing municipal areas of six large towns of over 100,000 inhabitants—towns not included in the above totals. Nearly two and a half millions more live within the municipal limits of 35 towns with populations between 50,000 and 100,000. Of course, many of these towns have suburbs which lie beyond their municipal boundaries, so that their real populations are considerably higher than the nominal totals. Call the total four millions, and we have still 10 million people who

Table 4

## REMAINING TOWNS WITH LARGE MUNICIPAL POPULATIONS

[illegible]

live in the country or in relatively small towns or in mining villages.

The Map on page 85 shows how all the large urban centres, down to the 100,000 level, are dispersed about the country, and serves to bring out the very different degrees of urbanization and of conurban 'development' in different areas. Clearly, if one of the great problems of modern government is to find the best way of planning without bureaucracy over areas where town runs into town with only narrow stretches of open country, or none, between, a second problem, fully as difficult, is that of finding the right method of co-operative planning in parts of the country which are more sparsely populated, and have their towns both much smaller and farther apart.

Let us take as an example of this type of area the extensive county of Devon, which is by no means among the less populous of the main areas of British agriculture, though it contains the great and mainly unproductive expanse of Dartmoor in the south and a part of Exmoor in the north. Devonshire is a county of many towns, as well as of many villages; but most of them are small. It contains one conurbation—Plymouth—centred upon the Royal Dockyard, with a population of about 250,000 within the county, mostly already included in its united Borough, into which Devonport and Stonehouse have been absorbed. Across the estuary in Cornwall lie Saltash and Torpoint, closely related to it, with a further 10,000 or so. Leaving these out, Plymouth with its environs contains more than one-third of the total population of the county, of which it lies at the extreme south-western corner. Exeter, the county town and a cathedral city, and once a port, lies in the south-east, with a population of 70,000 within the Borough, and about 100,000, including the suburban area. No other town in the county reaches 50,000; but there are 9 other Boroughs, all of non-county status, and 21 Urban Districts. The Boroughs range in size from Torquay, with 45,000 inhabitants, to Honiton and South Molton, with 3,000 apiece; the Urban Districts from Paignton, with over 22,000, to Holsworthy and Lynton, each with about 1,500. The Rural Districts have in all about 160,000 people, omitting the areas which are clearly suburban to Plymouth and Exeter, which have another 40,000.

[illegible]

# Proposed Incorporations

Boundaries are not meant to be exact

Of the Boroughs, Torquay and to a large extent Dartmouth are seaside resorts, living by the tourist trade; and so are, in the main, ten of the Urban Districts. The remaining Boroughs and Urban Districts are mainly small market towns, except the small fishing port of Brixham, which is also a holiday town. Exmouth is in part a residential satellite of Exeter, and in part a resort: Barnstaple and Bideford, here classed as market towns, have also their tourist aspect; and a good many of the smaller holiday resorts are mere Parishes, included in the Rural Districts for most administrative purposes.

The market towns, mostly with only a few thousand inhabitants, are well scattered about the county, and no place, even in the district of Dartmoor, is far removed from a town of sorts. They lie thickest in the extreme east, where Axminster, Honiton and Ottery St. Mary are close together and are near neighbours of the coast resorts, Sidmouth and Seaton. Between the little towns lie the many pleasant villages, and numerous, often upland, farms. The population of dairy cattle is large, though less than in neighbouring Somerset; and there are also many sheep on the higher land.

In such a county as this, planning is quite a different matter from that which faces the planners of South Lancashire, or the West Riding, or the North-East Coast. To begin with, Plymouth's problem is much more separate from that of the rest of the county than is the problem of Leeds from that of the West Riding as a whole, or at any rate from that of the whole textile and engineering area to which it belongs, or the problem of Manchester from that of the whole great conurbation of South-East Lancashire. Plymouth's problem does extend some way beyond its municipal limits; for there is the large question of re-building either in and around the old blitzed town or farther off, in satellite settlements. But the planning problems of Plymouth have little more in common with those of Exeter than with those of Southampton, and in some respects less.

Apart from the special case of Plymouth, however, the country has large common problems of planning, in some of which Plymouth is also concerned. The tourist trade is of very great importance to the whole area, and offers, with the development of holidays with pay for more and more of the

wage-earners, the easiest road to expansion of economic activities. The Devonshire resorts have, for the most part, plenty of room for growth; or, if a particular resort, such as Torquay, has not, there is all the more scope for the expansion of its neighbours and rivals. There is need for resorts, large and small, catering for a wide variety of purses, and of tastes; and even the farmers have to decide whether to rely exclusively on the gains of farming or to take in visitors as well during the season, to let camping sites and, when food is more abundant, to supply teas with 'real Devonshire cream'.

It is largely a new idea that this catering for the tourist industry calls for planning on more than a purely local basis. Hitherto, the resorts have been rivals, competing one with another rather than trying to put Devonshire as a whole still more 'on the map' as a district to make for. The influx of wartime visitors, who became in many cases residents for long periods, has done something to make the Devonshire people think rather more of the tourist trade as a matter in which they have a common concern—and differ about it, according as their main thought is to preserve their quietude and save their beauty spots from uglification, or to develop an expanding industry so as to have more to spend, both privately and publicly, on improving their ways of life.

This latter is a very pertinent consideration; for it has always been one of the great problems of the South-West (of Cornwall, of course, even more than of Devonshire) that it has had too little 'rateable value' to find it easy to achieve a high quality in its public services. The lack of large towns, with flourishing industries and wealthy residents, has been often used as an argument against regional autonomy for the South-West, and in favour of throwing it in—as it was thrown in when the Civil Defence Regions were constituted—with Somerset and Gloucester, and making Bristol, instead of Exeter or Plymouth, rank as the regional 'capital'. Devonshire, apart from Devonport Dockyard and some other Plymouth concerns of fair size, has no large-scale industries; and Plymouth itself would be in severe straits if the Dockyard were to be shut down, or its establishment considerably reduced. Tourism is an industry, though not one that is carried on in large-scale units; and to develop the tourist trade so as to cater effectively for the widest possible diversity

of visitors is a matter that calls for co-operative planning over the entire area. For it involves considering where to put new tourist centres, and what to make of them, and how best to develop the existing centres so as to make all their attractions part of a wide complementary appeal.

Nor is the problem of attracting other industries unimportant. There are a good many little factories scattered about already among the small Devonshire towns, from tweed-mills to saw-mills, and from cider-making to boat-building and pottery-making. The question is whether there should, and could economically, be many more, to diversify the means of employment and thus check the tendency of population to drift away to larger centres. This, too, is a matter which calls for concerted planning, and is clearly quite beyond the capacity of the smaller Local Authorities. It is even in practice largely beyond the means of the Devonshire County Council, though its administration covers, for many purposes, the whole county except Plymouth and Exeter. Such planning requires an authority able to speak for these cities as well as for the smaller towns and the rural areas—or perhaps an authority covering both Devon and Cornwall—though the two have not been notable in the past for working well together. They have not, for example, yet succeeded, as they might have done, in building up the University College of the South-West, at Exeter, to the full stature of a regional University, though that institution has come better through its severe struggles than seemed probable in its earlier days.

Devonshire, with or without Cornwall as partner, needs an effective planning authority for its agriculture as well as for its industry—for its task is essentially one of Town and Country Planning, not as two separate activities, but as one and the same. It needs to plan the relation of its agriculture to the possible development of the food-processing trades; and it needs to work out a pattern of land-use for town and country together that will protect it against being spoiled by either industrial development or the planless desecrations of tourism in its worse moods. But in creating its common institutions for planning, it must on no account destroy the self-government of the small units of which it is made up. Its need is not to merge these small units into a central administration comparable in scale with those which are

inevitable in densely populated areas, but to rescue them from the parochialism that besets them by showing them the way to fit, without loss of self-respect or local initiative, into a wider pattern of county and of regional government.

This does not mean that the existing areas, properly co-ordinated by means of a wider planning agency, will do as they are; for many, if not most, of these areas are at present of the wrong sort. The existing pattern of Local Government, in Devonshire as in other predominantly rural counties, cuts off the little market town from its surrounding countryside, and reunites them only over the wide area of the entire Administrative County. Honiton Borough and Honiton Rural District, Tiverton Borough and Tiverton Rural District, Crediton Urban District and Crediton Rural District, meet,—unless they happen to have set up a local Joint Planning Committee—only as constituents of the Devonshire County Council. There are no local administrative links between them. Yet surely what is wanted in such areas as these is a local body which represents not the small market town as against the country, or the countryside as against the market town, but the two together, as forming parts of a single and mutually indispensable union of complementary parts. The little separate town, cut off from its countryside, is a relic from the Middle Ages—from the time when the townsmen bought their precious independence of a countryside in chains to the local feudal lord. It is entirely inappropriate to-day, when townsmen and countrymen alike are supposed to enjoy self-government, and when the relation between town and country, in the mainly rural areas, has changed utterly because they are no longer opposites, as once they were, but stand together, in relation to all England, as the representatives of the country spirit in contrast to that of the great industrial towns.

This is essentially a problem of Local Government as a whole, rather than of planning as a special question. But it comes in here, because planning over wider areas can work well only if the right agencies are at hand for carrying the larger plans into detailed execution. In such a county as Devonshire there ought to be, instead of 32 separate urban authorities of sizes ranging from over 200,000 to less than 2,000, and 17 Rural Districts ranging from 30,000 to a very few thousands,

a town-and-country pattern of, say, not more than a dozen or so country districts, including their little market-town centres, and a small number of holiday resorts large enough to serve as reasonable units for localized planning, *plus*, of course, the two main urban centres at Plymouth and Exeter.

The reader is asked, at this point, to look for himself at the county map—either at the sketch map which I have made for this book, or at a larger map not made to illustrate any particular thesis. He will find, I think, that most parts of the county can be grouped quite easily and naturally round the places which serve them as market centres. Leave aside for the moment the special question of the holiday resorts, to which we shall come back later, and consider the county apart from its tourist traffic, as a mainly agricultural area, with small-scale industries here and there and with only two urban concentrations of any size. In the extreme north, Barnstaple is plainly marked out as the centre of a small district which includes no other town, even of the smallest, except the resorts of Ilfracombe and Lynton—the latter very small indeed. To the south of this district lies a stretch of country from Exmoor on the east to the sea and to the Cornish border. In this are three towns—Bideford, with about 9,000 people, South Molton, with about 3,000, and Holsworthy, with only about 1,500. The whole district contains fewer than 50,000 people—a few thousands more than the area centred on Barnstaple farther north; and Bideford would seem to be the most convenient of its three centres, as well as the largest.

To the south of this district lie three areas—that of Dartmoor in the west, the area round Crediton to the north of Exeter in the centre, and the area round Tiverton in the east. In the Dartmoor district are two small towns, Okehampton, with under 4,000 people, and Tavistock, with under 6,000, a large area of the moor lying between them. That Okehampton is a Borough and Tavistock only an Urban District may create difficulties; but Tavistock seems to be more the valid centre for the whole area, which has common characteristics centred upon the moor, and would be much better unified under a single administration. Even unified, with Chagford and Moretonhampstead and the other little moorland places, it would have fewer than 40,000 people.

The central area, round Crediton, is so near to Exeter as to present a more difficult problem. Crediton is a little town of 4,000 people, and there is nothing of any size in the area to the north of it. This area could hardly stand alone, and could best be grouped either with Tiverton or with Exeter. East of it, towards the county border, lies the Tiverton district, in which is also the small town of Bampton, with fewer than 1,500 people. Tiverton has 10,000, and the entire area, including Crediton and Bampton, would have under 35,000.

To the south of this Tiverton-Crediton district lie Exeter and, at the eastern end of the county, the three small towns of Honiton, Ottery St. Mary and Axminster, as well as the resorts of Sidmouth and Seaton, on the coast. The three inland towns are much of a size, from 2,500 to 3,500; but Honiton has the status of a Borough, whereas the other two are only Urban Districts. The two Rural Districts around them have a combined population of less than 17,000. Sidmouth and Seaton together have 11,000. The whole district, including the resorts, has fewer than 40,000 inhabitants. It would clearly be better off with one main Local Authority than with half a dozen, even if Sidmouth and Seaton, as a combined 'resort' area, were to 'contract out', perhaps with Budleigh Salterton as a third partner.

As for Exeter and its neighbourhood, the inclusion of its suburbs would add another 30,000 or so to its 70,000 inhabitants, and that of Exmouth, its sea-coast neighbour, another 16,000.

West of Exeter lies the area extending from the south end of Dartmoor to the projecting promontory on which lie Salcombe, Kingsbridge and, farther up the coast, Dartmouth. North of Dartmouth lie Brixham and the strung-out seaside resorts—Paignton, Torquay, Teignmouth and Dawlish. Inland from the first two of these lies the little town of Totnes, and similarly inland from the other two Newton Abbot. This last, a railway centre of some importance, is clearly marked out as the local 'capital' of a district which includes the two very small towns of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, each with fewer than 3,000 people, whereas Newton Abbot has nearly 15,000, and over 20,000 in its surrounding Rural District. Dartmouth seems the natural centre for the most southerly area, including Brixham, Kingsbridge, Salcombe and Totnes,

# RURAL AND URBAN PATTERNS

with a total population, urban and rural, of rather less than 50,000. Alternatively, Totnes and its envioning countryside, including the interesting area of Dartington, with its 'modern' school and its diversified experiments in agriculture and industry, could be grouped with Newton Abbot, leaving the Dartmouth district with about 30,000. The coastal strip, from Paignton to Dawlish, clearly belongs to a different genus, as its activity is almost wholly centred upon the tourist traffic.

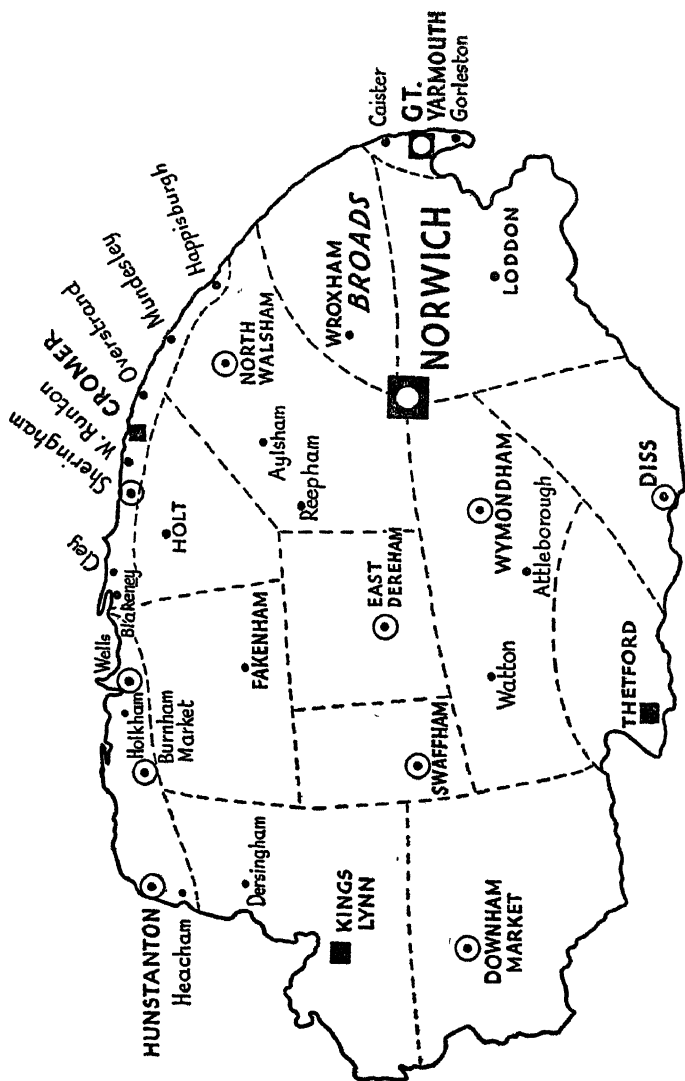
There is left, to the west of the Dartmouth district, a stretch of open country, with a few small resorts, extending to Plymouth, and falling clearly within its sphere. In this area are Yelverton, Plympton, and a few smaller places, with room for satellites of the great town, should it decide to decentralize some of its population in preference to building on the blitzed sites or directly on to the existing urban area.

On this showing, we should get for Devonshire as a whole, apart from Plymouth, Exeter, and the main holiday resorts, seven manageable town-and-country districts, each with a character of its own, and each with a small urban centre in close touch with the countryside around it. These centres—to recapitulate—would be as follows:

Table 5  
PROPOSED 'DISTRICT' AREAS OF DEVONSHIRE  
(excluding large towns and main holiday resorts)

	<i>Population of Main Centre 000's</i>	<i>Estimated Total Population 000's</i>	<i>Resorts Excluded</i>
BARNSTAPLE	15	35	Ilfracombe 8
BIDEFORD	9	46	
DARTMOOR (Tavistock)	6	37	
TIVERTON	10	42	
HONITON	3	26	Sidmouth & Seaton 11
NEWTON ABBOT	15	35	
DARTMOUTH	6	30	

This leaves the problem of the holiday resorts—Ilfracombe, in the north and five or six in the south of the county. Obviously, the four towns which lie close together between Exeter and Brixham ought to plan together as a group, even



## NORFOLK: Showing Market Towns and Resorts, Suggested Incorporations in Capitals.

- Existing County Boroughs
- " " Non-County Boroughs
- " " Urban Districts

The Broken Line very roughly indicates Suggested Districts.

if they retain their separate municipal administrations. They are at present rivals, Torquay priding itself on being 'high-class', and Paignton and Teignmouth on being more 'democratic'. But, even if they preserve their separate appeals, that is no good reason why they should not plan together—much less why they should dispute. They could with advantage not only plan but endow their Joint Planning Authority with considerable executive powers for the provision of common services to the whole area. Sidmouth, Seaton, Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton, with Beer, could probably combine with advantage into a single municipal authority; and on the north coast, the very small centre of Lynton and Lynmouth could establish close links with Ilfracombe a few miles to the west.

Table 6  
PROPOSED 'DISTRICT' AREAS OF NORFOLK

LIST OF AREAS		Present Population of Town or Village	Other Places Included
1.	NORWICH C.B.	122,000	
2.	GREAT YARMOUTH C.B.	53,000	Gorleston, Caister
3.	KING'S LYNN M.B.	24,000	Dersingham
4.	THETFORD M.B.	4,000	
5.	CROMER M.B.	4,000	Sheringham, U.D. 4,000, Cley, W. Runton, Overstrand, Mundesley
6.	HUNSTANTON U.D.	3,000	Wells U.D. 3,500, Burnham Market, Holkham, Heacham
7.	DOWNHAM MARKET U.D.	2,500	
8.	SWAFFHAM U.D.	2,500	
9.	EAST DEREHAM U.D.	6,000	
10.	NORTH WALSHAM U.D.	4,000	Aylsham, Reepham
11.	WYMONDHAM U.D.	5,000	Attleborough, Watton
12.	DISS U.D.	3,500	
13.	LODDON R.D.(R.D.)	11,500	
14.	WROXHAM —	1,000	Potter Heigham
15.	HOLT —	2,000	
16.	FAKENHAM —	3,000	

Such groupings, over the whole country, would give a greatly improved framework for the provision of efficient services and for the adequate expression of local opinions. It would convert the little Town Councils' and U.D.C.s' parish pump politics to a sound relation to the countryside on which they depend, and would promote a much better organization of the great and expanding industry of catering for the tourist traffic. In doing this, it would put new vigour and meaning into the activities of the County Council, or into some wider body in which Plymouth and Exeter, as well as the smaller towns and the country areas, could play their part.

It would be tedious to go over any large part of England, county by county, in the way in which we have gone over Devonshire. But it is worth while to consider at any rate one other mainly agricultural county area by area. Let us take the large, mainly arable, county of Norfolk, with its light soils, its wheat-growing, and its essentially rural distribution of population over most of its area. In all Norfolk there are but two towns of considerable size—Norwich, the capital city and the only important manufacturing centre, and Great Yarmouth, which doubles the parts of fishing port and holiday resort. Norwich, an ancient city which ranked before the Industrial Revolution as one of the half-dozen greatest English towns, grew but slowly in comparison with most other large cities during the nineteenth century and has shown, even in the twentieth, no signs of developing into a conurbation. There is no big place nearer to it than Great Yarmouth, nearly twenty miles away; and it has spread by the simple process of building outwards, without coming into contact with any urban neighbour. Its nearest neighbour that can be called a town is Wymondham, nine miles off, and the country round it, except to the north-east, where the Broads lie between it and the coast, is purely agricultural. It is no longer, as it was once, the centre of a widespread cottage industry scattered over the villages of a large part of the county. Its industries, especially bootmaking and engineering, are important, but they are isolated, and do not form part of any regional complex. Norwich has about 122,000 inhabitants, or, with its suburbs, upwards of 150,000; but it stands separate.

Norwich's nearest non-agricultural neighbours are the

fishing and holiday town of Great Yarmouth, with its holiday satellites, Gorleston and Caister, and the holiday area of the Norfolk Broads. Great Yarmouth is a County Borough, like Norwich: its population is well over 50,000, or with its satellites about 80,000. The area of the Broads lying to the north, between Norwich at one end and Yarmouth at the other, is thinly populated: Wroxham, the chief place of the area, has fewer than a thousand inhabitants. It ought to be made into some sort of national reserve, and given some authority of its own for planning its development with the necessary help from outside. For the rest, the three holiday resorts could well be combined in a single administrative area by an extension of Great Yarmouth to include the entire coastal district from above Caister to the county border. Lowestoft, eight miles south of Gorleston, in Suffolk, could well collaborate closely with them in planning the tourist future of this strip of coast.

Norfolk has two other main holiday areas. The first of these consists of the group of small towns at the north-eastern corner of the county, from Sheringham to Mundesley, with West Runton, Cromer, Overstrand and Sidestrand in between. These places have a combined population of about 10,000. The second group, spread over a much larger area, lies beyond Sheringham, along the north coast of Norfolk, with a number of little places by or near the sea—Cley, Blakeney, Stiffkey, Wells, the Burnhams, Brancaster and Holkham; and, beyond these round the point and facing the Wash, lie Hunstanton and Heacham. All these places together have only about 11,000 inhabitants. The two groups could probably best be kept separate for purposes of administration; but there is every reason why they should join with the areas round Yarmouth and the Broads in planning the future of Norfolk as an area of active tourist traffic.

We come now to the agricultural part of the county, which is the whole of it except Norwich, the Broads, and a coastal fringe. There is in the entire area only one town of any size—King's Lynn, with about 24,000 people. King's Lynn is a little port, standing up-river from the Wash in the extreme north-west of the county, and surrounded by a purely agricultural area. It has close connections with Wisbech in the Isle of Ely and with the Holland area of Lincolnshire. Eleven

miles to the south of it lies the small town of Downham Market, with about 2,500 people, a typical Norfolk market town, till recently hardly more than a central village, but now expanded into a small residential town. East and a little north-east of this, about 15 miles away and about the same distance from King's Lynn, lies Swaffham, a little, but only a little, more populous than Downham. Eastwards another dozen miles lies the larger market town of East Dereham, with about 6,000. Twelve miles north of East Dereham lies Fakenham, with about 3,000 people; twelve miles or so north-east of this lies Holt, with about 2,000, and a famous Grammar School; and to the north-east, about eleven miles from Holt and nearly twenty east of Fakenham is Aylsham, with about 2,600. Only seven miles on farther east is North Walsham, with 4,000 inhabitants.

To the south of North Walsham we come to the Broads, round Wroxham and Potter Heigham, and to Norwich. Between Norwich and Yarmouth and to the south of Norwich lies a country with no places in it even approaching the character of a town. Loddon, the centre of a Rural District, has about 1,000 people. Beyond this area, along the southern frontier of the county, we come first to Diss, over twenty miles from Loddon, with 3,400, and then, sixteen miles farther on, to Thetford, with 4,000 inhabitants. Twelve miles north-east of Thetford lies Watton, with 1,400, and ten miles or so east of Watton is Wymondham, with 5,000, under ten miles from Norwich. Between Watton and Wymondham, but farther south, lies Attleborough, with a population of 2,600.

Counting Loddon, at the one extreme, and King's Lynn at the other, this gives a total of fourteen market towns spread at fairly even distances over the agricultural area of the county. Of these Aylsham and North Walsham lie rather close together in the north-east, and Watton, Wymondham and Attleborough in the centre. If these were grouped into two combined areas, we should be left with a pattern of eleven rural areas, each with a little town (or more than one), besides the three coastal areas, the Broads, and Norwich—a total of sixteen groups, all except Norwich, the Yarmouth group and, on a lesser scale, King's Lynn, of small and scattered population.

Norfolk, as a whole, is thus a good deal less urban than

Devonshire. Its towns are smaller, and its countryside falls into smaller circles of community. There is, except in Norwich and in the resorts, nothing to mark out one large tract of the county as different from another, or to suggest that intermediate groupings between the small districts just listed and the county as a whole would be able to focus any real community feeling. There would be great advantage in unifying the government of the small market towns, where it is now separate, with that of the country round them; but that, short of action over the whole country, is all that needs doing. Actually, of the fourteen market towns mentioned, two—King's Lynn and Thetford—are non-county Boroughs, and six are Urban Districts; but none of the eleven suggested areas contains more than one Borough or Urban District. The correct local pattern is thus reasonably clear. It is illustrated, with the suggested arrangements for Norwich, the coastal districts, and the Broads, in the map on page 120.

We find, then, in Norfolk an urban-rural pattern distinctly different from that of Devonshire, and requiring somewhat different arrangements, both for planning and for other local government purposes. From this we must take warning not to assume that one scheme will suit all the rural parts of the country, any more than one scheme can be made to fit all the different types of grouping in the industrial areas. Each region and district needs studying on its own, and the first thing to be done in each case is to lay bare the broad pattern of community relations as they at present exist.

Let us now turn back to an industrial area of a different type from those which we have considered already. In the preceding chapter we were concerned primarily with the problem of the great conurbations and continuous areas of urban development, and incidentally with that of other very large towns. In that connection we had to discuss the problems of the southern part of Lancashire, mainly in relation to the two great conurbations centred on Liverpool and Manchester, with its considerable number of middle-sized and small industrial towns in the area north of the great conurbations and with its comparatively sparse population still farther north.

As the accompanying Table shows, there are in the whole County of Lancaster 80 places with upwards of 10,000

Table 7

## TOWNS IN LANCASHIRE WITH 10,000 OR MORE INHABITANTS

Over 500,000	2	(LIVERPOOL), (MANCHESTER).
Others over 100,000	7	BLACKBURN, BLACKPOOL, BOLTON, OLDHAM, PRESTON, ST. HELENS, (SALFORD).
Others over 50,000	10	BARROW, (BOOTLE), BURNLEY, BURY, ROCHDALE, SOUTHPORT, WARRINGTON, WIGAN, (CROSBY), (STRETFORD).
Others over 40,000	6	(Ashton-under-Lyne), (Eccles), Lancaster, Leigh, (Swinton), Widnes.
Others over 30,000	11	Accrington, Chorley, Darwen, Lytham-St. Anne's, Middleton, Morecambe and Heysham, Nelson, (Prestwich), Chadderton, (Huyton), (Urmston).
Others over 20,000	13	Colne, Farnworth, Fleetwood, Heywood, Radcliffe, Rawtenstall, Atherton, (Denton), (Droylsden), Hindley, Ince, Newton-le-Willows, (Worsley).
Others over 15,000	11	Bacup, Haslingden, Ormskirk, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Failsworth, Horwich, (Litherland), Ramsbottom, Royton, Tyldesley, Westhoughton.
Others over 10,000	20	Clihaloe, (Mossley), (Audenshaw), Crompton, Dalton-in-Furness, Fulwood, Golborne, Great Harwood, Haydock, (Irlam), Kearsley, Leyland, Littleborough, Oswaldtwistle, Padiham, (Prescot), Thornton, Turton, Walton-le-Dale, Whitefield.
<hr/>		
	80	
<hr/>		

County Boroughs in CAPITALS. Other Boroughs in *italics*. The rest are Urban Districts. The places in (brackets) have been assigned in Chapter V to the conurbations of Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

inhabitants. Of these, 19 have more than 50,000 people, and 17 out of the 19 are County Boroughs, which are accordingly under the present system of Local Government entirely outside the jurisdiction of the Lancashire County Council. 27 more are non-county Boroughs, and the remaining 36 are Urban Districts. These totals include the areas which have been assigned in a previous chapter to the conurbations of Merseyside and Greater Manchester. These two together include 4 County Boroughs, 7 other Boroughs, and 9 Urban Districts—in addition to the places in Cheshire which lie within their suggested limits. This leaves, for the rest of Lancashire, 13 County Boroughs, all with populations of more than 50,000, as well as 20 non-county Boroughs and 27 Urban Districts with more than 10,000 people. None of the non-county Boroughs has more than 50,000 inhabitants; but 3 have more than 40,000, and 7 more than 30,000. The smallest Borough is Clitheroe, with only about 11,000. Of the Urban Districts, one, Chadderton, has a population of over 30,000, and 3, as well as 6 other Boroughs, exceed 20,000.

The concentration of urban populations is thickest in the south of the county, in the area lying between the Manchester and Liverpool conurbations, with which it is indeed practically continuous. The line begins with Oldham, Middleton, Bury, and Bolton, and a number of lesser places, which encircle the Manchester area to the north. It continues beyond Bolton through to Wigan and St. Helens to the outskirts of the Merseyside area, or south of these through Leigh, Warrington, and Widnes to the neighbourhood of Garston in the Merseyside conurbation. In the midst of this westerly group of towns lies the main part of the Lancashire coal-field.

To the north of this densely populated area of South Lancashire the jostle of urban areas becomes less, but in the eastern part of the county there is no clear gap between the southern area and the roughly parallel group that stretches across Mid-Lancashire. Rochdale, to the north of Oldham, is a link town between the two groups, somewhat parted from the Mid-Lancashire area by the Forest of Rossendale, which is, however, studded with industrial towns making boots and shoes as well as cotton goods.

# LANCASHIRE:

## PROPOSED INCORPORATIONS AND CONURBATIONS.



The Mid-Lancashire group runs in an irregular curve across the county from Colne and Nelson in the east, close to the Yorkshire border, through Burnley, Accrington, Blackburn, and Chorley towards a still largely rural area round Ormskirk, beyond which lie Southport and Formby, north of the Merseyside conurbation. To the north of Chorley lies Preston, belonging to the same group, while Clitheroe lies isolated on the Yorkshire border north-west of Nelson and Colne.

These Mid-Lancashire towns mark the end of the main textile and industrial area. Farther north lies a considerable area of mainly agricultural land, containing only three towns of considerable size—the big holiday resort of Blackpool, the old county town of Lancaster, of greater economic importance formerly than to-day, and, far away in the detached Furness peninsula, the large shipbuilding town of Barrow, with the ironworks in its neighbourhood. This northernmost spur of Lancashire includes, besides Barrow and its industrial area, a part of the Lake District—Coniston, Hawkshead, and part of Windermere.

It is easiest to begin with this extreme northern part of the county. In the Furness Peninsula, besides Barrow-in-Furness, with nearly 70,000 people, lie Dalton, Ulverston, and a number of smaller places, with a total population of nearly 100,000, including Barrow itself. The administration of all this district would surely be much better unified under a single authority, with important frontier rectifications, to take in Millom and one or two other places now in Cumberland, and to transfer the Lakeland area to the care of a new authority with jurisdiction over the entire Lake District, which is at present split up among three distinct counties.

To the east of the area just described, Westmorland pokes down to the sea at Arnside, cutting off the far north of Lancashire from the rest of the county. This is the region of Morecambe Bay, with Morecambe in the south looking across to Grange in the north, and Arnside and Bolton-le-Sands between. A little inland, behind Bolton-le-Sands, lies Carnforth, with agricultural country behind it, and behind Morecambe lies Lancaster, with 48,000 people. To the south of Morecambe, well beyond the bay, is the small port of Heysham, which is municipally united to it. In all this area, including the rural hinterland, there are upwards of

100,000 people—40,000 or so in Morecambe, Heysham and the rest of the coastal belt, and the rest in Lancaster and the agricultural hinterland. Either the whole area could be unified under a single major administration, or it could be divided into these two groups, so as to give the tourist area its opportunity of planning its own development in consultation with the other tourist districts of the county.

South of Lancaster lies the very small town of Garstang in a predominantly agricultural district; and on the coast west of Garstang is the developing fishing port of Fleetwood, much used during the war, when many vessels were transferred there from the East Coast ports. Here is the Fylde district, extending behind the great holiday resort of Blackpool, which lies nine miles south of Fleetwood, with St. Anne's and Lytham, now combined to form a single Borough, away farther south, on the north side of the Ribble estuary. Up the estuary lies the big town of Preston, the administrative capital of the Lancashire County Council, with well over 100,000 inhabitants.

The Fleetwood-Fylde area, including Garstang and the small towns of Poulton, Thornton and, perhaps, Kirkham, behind St. Anne's, contains nearly 70,000 people, and forms a reasonable unit. Blackpool, with Lytham-St. Anne's and one or two smaller places on the coast, contains 160,000 or more. Preston, with Walton-le-Dale, Fulwood, and its rural hinterland, has about 175,000. Here, then, are three more well-defined areas, based respectively on a fishing port, a big holiday centre, and a large textile town which is also the administrative and business centre of most of northern Lancashire.

To the south of this area, on the coast, lies another large holiday resort, Southport, about 18 miles from Preston; and beyond Southport lie a number of smaller seaside places extending to the frontiers of the Liverpool conurbation. Formby is the largest, with fewer than 9,000 people: the entire coastal strip contains about 90,000. Inland lies Ormskirk, the market town for an agricultural area—the largest in South Lancashire—that extends from the frontiers of Merseyside to the colliery districts round Wigan and to the textile and engineering area farther north. It includes Upholland, Standish, Burscough and Lathom, and Skelmersdale, with about 80,000 people in all.

North-eastwards from this district runs the line of industrial towns from Chorley and Darwen to Nelson and Colne on the Yorkshire border. Chorley, famous for its wartime Royal Ordnance Factory, comes first, with Leyland to the north of it, nearer Preston, and a substantial rural area around it. This district, including Chorley, has a population of about 70,000. Beyond it, to the north-east, lies Blackburn, with Darwen close beside it—an area of about 155,000, with cotton as its principal industry. Beyond Blackburn is Accrington, itself much smaller, but the chief of a number of middle-sized textile and boot-making towns in or about the ancient Forest of Rossendale. Here are Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Bacup, Church, Oswaldtwistle, Rishton and Ramsbottom; and, farther north, Great Harwood and Clayton-le-Moors—in all about 150,000 people, with no town larger than Accrington, which has a population just under 40,000. These places seem to form a natural group, with Accrington as its principal centre.

Beyond this region of small towns we come to Burnley, with its smaller neighbours, Padiham and Brierfield—a group of upwards of 120,000 people; and north-east of Burnley lie Nelson and Colne, with Barrowford and Trawden, and a rural environment. Clitheroe, small and isolated, lies away to the north-west of this group, and connects it with Padiham and Burnley. Including Clitheroe, this group has a population of about 85,000.

Fifteen miles south of Burnley, but only eight south of Bacup, lies Rochdale, the cradle of Consumers' Co-operation, and an ancient meeting point between Lancashire and Yorkshire, because it was a woollen town before it went over to cotton, and especially to flannel making. Rochdale, with the smaller places round it—Milnrow, Wardle, Whitworth, Littleborough, and a few more—is the centre for a population of about 120,000. To the south of it, only six miles away across the moors, lies Oldham, which, with its satellites Chadderton, Crompton, Royton, and Lees, contains about 190,000 people. To the west of Oldham lies Middleton, with another 30,000, and near it Failsworth, with nearly 18,000. These constitute a doubtful area, which can be grouped either with Oldham or as part of Greater Manchester, which they adjoin, or can be regarded as a separate centre.

This Middleton area lies between Oldham and Bury, the next largish centre, which is about seven miles west of Rochdale and six miles east of Bolton. With Heywood, midway between it and Rochdale, and with Radcliffe, Whitefield, and a few smaller places, it is the centre of an area of well over 100,000 people, due north of the Manchester conurbation, with which it is practically continuous. It is an engineering as well as a textile area, and it has equally close connections with Bolton, a much bigger place, the centre of the fine cotton spinning industry and important in the making of textile machinery. Here we come into the coalfield area, and find pits cheek by jowl with factories. Frontiers are very hard to fix; for on the west and south there is no clear line between the Bolton district and the areas which look rather towards Leigh and Wigan. Bolton itself has nearly 170,000 people; and with Farnworth, about two miles nearer Manchester to the south-east, Kearsley, Turton, Little Lever, Horwich and Westhoughton, the district has a population of more than 250,000.

To the south of the Bolton district is Leigh, in the heart of the coalfield, with Atherton and Tyldesley; and to the west and south of these lie more coalfield towns and villages—Ashton-in-Makerfield, Newton-le-Willows, and to the north of these Hindley and Ince. North-west, a few miles from Hindley, is Wigan, the largest of the Lancashire mining towns, with over 80,000 people. The grouping of all this area is bound to be largely arbitrary. Tentatively, I divide it into three groups, centred respectively on Leigh, Wigan, and Newton-le-Willows—the Wigan district with about 115,000, and the other two with from 80,000 to 85,000 apiece.

Beyond this area to the west lies St. Helens, a big town with diversified industries, on the borders of the Merseyside conurbation, to which it could even be assigned. To the south of St. Helens, beside the Mersey, are Warrington, with its wire manufacture, and Widnes, redolent of chemicals. Warrington, with the small places round it, exceeds 100,000 inhabitants; Widnes, with its neighbours, has about 75,000. Beyond Widnes we come yet again to the Merseyside conurbation, which spreads out along the estuary east of Garston. This completes our summary review of Lancashire outside the two great conurbations discussed in a previous chapter of this book.

Table 8

## A LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCHEME FOR LANCASHIRE: 1. The Great Conurbations

	<i>C.B.s included</i>	<i>Other Boroughs included</i>	<i>U.D.s included</i>	<i>R.D.s included</i>	<i>Total Estimated Population</i>
1. MERSEYSIDE (including parts of Cheshire)	Liverpool Bootle Birkenhead Wallasey	Crosby Bebington	Wirral Prescot Huyton Litherland Hoylelake Neston	—	1,350,000
2. GREAT MANCHESTER (including parts of Cheshire)	Manchester Salford Stockport	Ashton-under- Lyne Eccles Mossley Prestwich Stretford Swinton ? Middleton Altrincham Dukinfield Hyde Sale Stalybridge	Audenshaw Denton Droylsden Irlam Urmston Worsley ? Failsworth Alderley Edge Bowdon Bredbury and Romiley Cheadle and Gatley Hale Hazel Grove Longdendale Lymm Marple Wilmslow ? Knutsford	Limehurst Bucklow Disley Tintwistle	1,750,000

NOTE.—The Rural Districts would in many cases be divided: they are here assigned to the areas with which the larger part of their population appears to be most closely connected.

# A LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCHEME FOR LANCASHIRE: 2. The County Districts

See NOTE on Page 136

	C.B.s included	Other Boroughs included	U.D.s included	R.D.s included	Total Estimated Population 100,000
1. FURNESS	Barrow	—	Dalton Ulverston	Ulverston	
2. MORECAMBE	—	Morecambe and Heysham	Grange Carnforth ? Preesall	—	40,000
3. LANCASTER	—	Lancaster		Lunesdale Lancaster	60,000
4. FLEETWOOD and FYLDE		Fleetwood	Garstang Poulton Thornton Longridge ? Kirkham	Fylde	70,000
5. BLACKPOOL	Blackpool	Lytham-St. Anne's	—	—	160,000
6. PRESTON	Preston		Fulwood Walton-le-Dale	Preston	175,000
7. SOUTHPORT	Southport		Formby		90,000
8. ORMSKIRK		Ormskirk	Skelmersdale Standish Upholland	W. Lancs.	80,000
9. CHORLEY		Chorley	Leyland Withnell	Chorley	70,000
10. BLACKBURN	Blackburn	Darwen		Blackburn	155,000

Accrington  
Haslingden  
Rawtenstall  
Bacup  
Kambsbottom  
Great Harwood  
Rishton  
Clayton-le-Moors  
Church  
Oswaldtwistle

—

150,000

12. BURNLEY	Burnley	Padham Brierfield	Burnley	125,000
13. NELSON and COLNE	Nelson Colne Clitheroe	Barrowford Trawden	Clitheroe	85,000
14. ROCHDALE	Rochdale	Milnrow Wardle Whitworth Littleborough		120,000
15. OLDHAM	Oldham	? Middleton Chadderton Crompton Royton Failsworth		190,000*
16. ? MIDDLETON		Middleton Failsworth		50,000
17. BURY	Bury	Heywood Radcliffe Tottington		105,000
18. BOLTON	Bolton	Farnworth Kearsley Little Lever Horwich Westhoughton Turton		250,000

\*Or 240,000 with Middleton and Failsworth.

# A LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCHEME FOR LANCASHIRE: 2. The County Districts—Continued

	<i>C.B.s included</i>	<i>Other Boroughs included</i>	<i>U.D.s included</i>	<i>R.D.s included</i>	<i>Total Estimated Population</i>
19. LEIGH		Leigh	Atherton Tyldesley		85,000
20. WIGAN	Wigan		Abram Adlington Aspull Billinge Blackrod Ince Orrell		135,000
21. MAKERFIELD			Ashton-in- Makerfield Newton-le-Willows Golborne ? Haydock		60,000
22. ST. HELENS	St. Helens		Rainford Prescot		115,000
23. WARRINGTON	Warrington			Warrington	100,000
24. WIDNES		Widnes		Whiston	75,000

NOTE.—The Rural Districts would in many cases be divided: they are here assigned to the areas with which the larger part of their population appears to be most closely connected.

Lancashire, of course, is no more a 'typical' highly urbanized county than Devonshire or Norfolk is a 'typical' rural county. There are in England no such things as typical counties. The forms of agriculture and the characteristics of industrial development differ widely from area to area: the tourist trade affects the various counties in different ways and to very different extents. Moreover, apart from all this, the urban-rural structure of England is a product of history. The contrast between Devonshire and Norfolk in terms of their respective small-town patterns is derived largely from the different structure of their industries when they were both important areas for the woollen manufacture. The differences between the urban patterns of Lancashire and the West Riding depend partly on geography, but also partly on the greater tendency of the cotton industry, in comparison with the woollen industry, to become concentrated in large units. Lancashire, like the West Riding, has two main focuses of conurbation; but one of the two centres upon a great port, whereas the West Riding's main ports—Hull in the east and Liverpool itself in the west—lie both outside its limits, and away from its industrial area. Lancashire and Yorkshire both have their coalfields—the latter now much the more important—but the Lancashire coalfield lies much the more closely intermingled with the manufacturing area.

Again, Norfolk is predominantly an arable county, whereas Devonshire is mainly pastoral, and this affects both the shapes and sizes of the farms and the arrangements for marketing, which influences the urban pattern.

One great question that will be raised in connection with the notions outlined in this and the preceding chapters concerns the expediency of joining town and country together in single areas of administration. This, of course, means one thing in Devonshire and Norfolk, and quite another in Lancashire or the mainly industrial part of the West Riding. In both Devonshire and Norfolk, the towns, with very few exceptions, are essentially country towns, whose business is largely or even almost exclusively with the rural areas around them. They are the natural centres of the surrounding rural life—not alien cities which the countryman who visits them finds bent on their own quite different concerns. Amalgamation of town and country into single units capable of planning

equally for both is the obvious and natural solution of the local government problem, wherever such conditions exist. It is another matter—and one clearly more open to dispute—whether a similar solution is appropriate where town and country have, *in certain respects*, distinct and separate, and potentially antagonistic, interests and concerns.

I say advisedly “in certain respects”; for it is by no means the case that the interests are wholly distinct, much less antagonistic. In so vital a matter as the preservation of good agricultural land—to say nothing of rural amenities—the country districts, divorced for planning and administration from the near-by towns, have been wholly unable in most cases to protect their rural interests. The divorce often leads to the outbreaks of the worst rashes of planless suburbanization and ribbon development on rural land, and to the taking away from agriculture of some of the best farming areas. The relative poverty of the countryside, and the relatively low money value put on agricultural land, even of good quality, in comparison with ‘building values’, make it next door to impossible for a Parish or Rural District to stand out even against the most undesirable forms of building development. These promise a rise in rateable value, as well as high profit to local owners of land; and the temptations to bad land-use are in such cases nearly irresistible. An urban-rural authority, able to plan over a wider area, would be in a very much better position to control bad forms of development—to guide building away from key agricultural areas, to avoid the destruction of natural beauty, and in doing so to promote agricultural prosperity as well as better forms of urban growth.

This involves no denial that the rural areas have separate needs of their own, and require organized means of expressing them, and indeed of finding out what they are. I am not suggesting that the rural areas should do without their own instruments of Local Government, but rather that these should find their appropriate place within a wider town-and-country pattern. I believe, for example, that Parish Councils ought to have much more power and larger resources than they have now, and that such Councils should exist inside the larger local government areas which I have proposed. It has been one of the calamities of urban administrative growth that the extension of municipal areas has simply swept away

the pre-existing small Local Authorities of the areas that have been absorbed. The towns, as well as the villages, need small-scale units of government; and, as will be made plain later on, I want to revive the small unit inside the towns as well as to preserve and develop it in the rural areas.

Given this maintenance and better use of Local Authorities representing the small units of community living, surely it can be admitted that England would be better and more healthily governed if town and country were not cut off from each other as they so often are to-day. For planning, at any rate—and not only for planning on a large-regional scale, but also for the execution and detailed working out of such regional plans over smaller areas—the town-and-country form of authority is clearly the best. For how much besides it is also best we shall be able to see more plainly at a later stage.

Table 9

## PROPOSED PLANNING REGIONS

REGIONS	Counties Included	Approximate Population millions	Population Remaining Assignable to Major Conurbation millions	Population Remaining Assignable to Regional Planning Authority millions	Conurbations	Conurban Population
NORTH-WESTERN	Lancs, Cheshire	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	3	3 to 3 $\frac{1}{4}$	{ Gt. MANCHESTER MERSEYSIDE	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
LONDON ( <i>see frontispiece</i> )	All Ridings	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	(see pages 150)			
YORKSHIRE	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex	3	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Gt. LONDON	9
EAST ANGLIA	Durham,					
NORTH-EASTERN	Northumberland	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	$\frac{3}{4}$	TYNESIDE	1
WEST MIDLAND	Staffs, Warwick, Worcs., Hereford, Salop	4	2 to 2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2	Gt. BIRMINGHAM [Gt. LONDON]	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
SOUTH-EASTERN	Surrey, Kent, Sussex	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{4}$		
SOUTHERN	Hants, Berks.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	—	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		
NORTH-MIDLAND	Derby, Notts., Lincs.	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	—	2 $\frac{1}{4}$		
SOUTH-WESTERN	Devon, Cornwall	1	—	1		
EAST MIDLAND	Leics., Rutland, Northants, Oxon, Bucks.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	—	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		
WESTERN	Glos., Som., Wilts., Dorset	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	—	1 $\frac{3}{4}$		
EASTERN	Cambs., Hunts., Beds., Herts.	1	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	[Gt. LONDON]	
NORTHERN	Cumberland Westmorland	$\frac{1}{3}$	—	$\frac{1}{3}$		

## REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

ONE of the essential features of the five greatest English conurbations—Greater London, Greater Birmingham, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Tyneside—is that they all cut right across county boundaries, in such a way that no unification of them is possible without the inclusion of districts lying within more than one existing county. London laps over into Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey—even if no account is taken of the still wider dimensions of Sir Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London planning area. Greater Birmingham extends from Warwickshire into Staffordshire and Worcestershire. Greater Manchester spreads southwards from Lancashire into Cheshire and into a corner of Derbyshire. Merseyside's north bank is in Lancashire, and its south bank in Cheshire. Tyneside is similarly situated, partly in Northumberland and partly in Durham. In all these cases a unified conurban authority, capable of making *and of carrying out* comprehensive conurban plans, would have to take away considerable parts of more than one County from the planning and plan-executing jurisdiction of the County Councils, as well as to absorb a number of at present independent County Boroughs.

The two next largest conurbations, centred upon Leeds and Sheffield, do not raise so acute a problem. Greater Leeds—or Leeds-Bradford, should they be regarded as one—falls wholly within the West Riding; and even Greater Sheffield, though it can be widely enough drawn to lap over into Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, could be given a quite workable area falling entirely in the West Riding. Of other towns big enough to be treated as conurbations, Bristol stretches into both Gloucestershire and Somerset, and the Middlesbrough-Stockton group into both

Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire. Brighton and Worthing, if they be regarded as belonging to a single conurbation, involve both East and West Sussex, which are at present administratively separate; but, if these two parts of the county were reunited, the division would disappear. Greater Plymouth laps over into Cornwall, but not a great deal: no other of the thirty biggest towns listed on page 105. even with its area suitably extended for unified planning, involves more than a single County, in either a geographical or an administrative sense.

It seems to be evident that in the five major conurbations all the larger powers not only of planning, but also of putting the plans into effect, must be gathered into the hands of a single Authority, which will have to be also the principal local government authority for the whole area. This should not preclude the existence of lesser authorities inside the area, and operating over a particular part of it. Indeed, I believe the retention of such smaller authorities, and their establishment where they do not at present exist, to be an essential part of any plan of local government reform. What must be ruled out is the existence, within the areas of these four great conurbations, of any local executive authority claiming equality with them or dividing the essential planning powers. It is not practicable for the County Councils of Lancashire or Cheshire to retain any authority within the areas assigned to Greater Manchester or to Merseyside, any more than it is for Stockport or Salford or Birkenhead—or for that matter for Manchester or Liverpool to retain within the conurbation the independent powers of a County Borough.

It is, however, equally undesirable to cut these great conurbations off from all organized relations with the areas round them in the matter of Regional Planning. That this is so becomes fully evident as soon as planning is looked at from the standpoint of *dispersal* and of the establishment of new towns. The entire purpose of this policy would be negatived if the great conurbations were put in a position that would encourage them to expand into their own environs and to set up new satellite or dispersal towns exclusively within the areas placed under their administrative jurisdiction. To favour this would be to stimulate still further conurban

growth and to frustrate the entire policy of securing a better spread of population about the country. Accordingly, there must be for certain purposes regional planning areas, on a federal basis, much bigger than those of the greatest conurbations; for it would be fantastic to unify under a common administrative authority the entire area over which it is proposed that a conurban population is to be *dispersed*. If this line were to be followed, it would land us in the absurdity of treating Cambridge as a part of London, and probably of putting into Greater Liverpool a considerable section of North Wales.

We may dismiss such absurdities; and, if they are dismissed, it follows that there must be some sort of Joint Regional Planning Authority to link each of the great conurbations to its neighbours over a wide enough area to make possible a concerted policy of economic as well as social and constructional planning. Thus, in the North West, Greater Manchester and Merseyside must be somehow linked with all the rest of Lancashire and Cheshire, and to a lesser extent probably to other neighbouring areas. How this can best be done obviously depends on the structure of Local and Regional Government that is set up outside the great conurban areas; but that it will have to be done in one way or another does not admit of question.

Similarly, any other large conurbation that becomes a unified administrative area—without prejudice to the existence of lesser authorities within it—will clearly need to co-ordinate its planning with that of the areas beyond its conurban limits. In Yorkshire, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> there is an evident need for concerted planning over the entire industrial area of the West Riding, if not over the whole county; and the unified authorities of Greater Leeds and Greater Sheffield will have to enter into some sort of Joint Planning Authority covering their neighbours as well. The planning of Bristol will have to be closely concerted with that of the rest of Somerset and of Gloucestershire; and conurbations which fall wholly within a single County will have at the least to develop their planning in close conjunction with the remainder of these Counties. There is, however, some difference between the major and the lesser

<sup>1</sup> See pages 100 ff.

conurbations. The major conurban authorities are so large and have so much internal diversity that calls for reconciliation within their own frontiers, as to be entitled not to be overridden in any matter of internal policy, except on the ground that what they are proposing runs counter to *national* planning policy—that is, not to be overridden except by some body speaking with the authority of the Government itself. Subject to this requirement of conformity to national planning conditions, their relations with their neighbours will have to be conducted on a basis of consent. Thus, the Joint Planning Authority for the North West cannot, I think, be given power, however it may be constituted, to give orders by a majority vote to the Greater Manchester or to the Merseyside authority. Normally the Joint Planning Authority will have to work by getting the consent of Greater Manchester, save to the extent to which it is acting as the agent of the national authority in transmitting the requirements of the overriding national plan.

I do not think that the same rule can be applied to the smaller conurbations—much less to other large towns. These will need for purposes of Regional Planning to be included with other areas in Regional Planning Authorities entitled to reach binding decisions by a majority vote, on matters which are really regional, even where this means overriding the views of the large town or conurbation—or rather of its elected Council. Regional Planning simply will not work unless the Regional Authority is given, in matters which call for co-ordinated regional action, the power to make operative decisions which it will then be the duty of the lesser authorities within the Region to carry into effect. These overriding powers can of course be limited in scope, and for the most part the actual execution of the decisions can be left in the hands of the smaller authorities. But the duty of executing them must be plainly prescribed, or the entire scheme of regional co-ordination will break down.

It is of course a moot point where to draw the line between conurbations that are and that are not to be conceded the autonomy—subject only to the requirements of the national plan—that I have postulated as necessary for the 'Big Five'. In the case of the Yorkshire conurbations, I do not feel that the concession can be made, because of the need for a high

degree of unified planning for the industrial area of the West Riding as a whole. Nor do I believe that the concession should be made to such other great cities as Bristol, Hull, and Stoke-on-Trent. I hold that they, like smaller towns and cities, should be included in Planning Regions for which there should be Regional Planning Authorities armed with the power of making binding decisions by a majority vote. These Planning Authorities, however, should not be general purpose authorities with any considerable executive functions of their own. They should be planning bodies, for the most part not executing their own projects, but leaving the execution in the hands of the separate authorities within their regional areas.

What is to be the nature of these separate authorities within each Region? This has been to a great extent suggested already in the examples given in preceding chapters. In Norfolk, for example, I have proposed the division of the entire county area into 16 Districts. These Districts would be either rural areas, each with a small market town as its centre, or groups of neighbouring coast resorts, or, in the one case of Norwich, a large town with a belt of country round it. These Districts, or 'Incorporations', as I prefer to call them, are obviously, with the exception of Norwich, too small to serve as planning areas for any sort of Regional Planning—though not too small to act as executants of regional projects within their own areas, with the help and, where necessary, the supervision of some wider body. I suggest that, except for Norwich, the Norfolk County Council should be the general Planning Authority for the whole County, but that there should be, with superior planning powers, a Regional Planning Authority covering not only Norfolk, but also Suffolk and the parts of Essex not assigned to Greater London, and that this Regional Authority should cover Norwich and Ipswich as well as the rest of the counties in which they stand.

Similarly, in the South West, I have proposed a division of the county of Devonshire into 12 Districts, or 'Incorporations'—Plymouth, Exeter, three groups of holiday resorts, and seven 'town and country' districts centred upon the scattered market towns. Of these, I think Plymouth, Exeter, and the three groups of resorts should be recognized as general Planning

Authorities, whereas in the other seven areas the general planning powers should be in the hands of the Devonshire County Council; but I think there should be a Regional Planning Authority with superior powers covering the whole of the Counties of Devonshire and Cornwall, including the bigger towns as well as the rest.

The North West, because of the presence of the two great conurbations, presents a rather different problem. I have suggested in Chapter VI that Lancashire, apart from the areas to be included in Greater Manchester and in Merseyside, could suitably be divided up, for general administrative purposes, into 24 Districts, or 'Municipalities', with populations ranging from 40,000 to a quarter of a million, each centred upon a major town, usually but not in all cases a County Borough. These new 'town and country' areas are all big enough to be recognized as general Planning Authorities for executive purposes, but obviously not for making of any sort of regional plan. They should, I suggest, be grouped in a Lancashire Regional Planning Authority, with co-ordinating powers and the right to take binding decisions for the whole area outside the two great conurbations. Cheshire should have a corresponding arrangement of Districts, or 'Incorporations', and a corresponding Regional Planning Authority; and the two County Authorities, together with the Authorities of Merseyside and Greater Manchester, should constitute a Joint Planning Authority, which should not, however, be entitled to decide matters except by consent, save to the extent to which it acted under national authority, as the regional transmitter of the overriding provisions of the national plan. The number of Districts would, of course, be much smaller in Cheshire than in Lancashire; and it should be open to the two Counties, if they wished, to merge their separate Regional Planning Authorities into a single body. But it would be unwise to attempt to merge them compulsorily.

These examples must serve to indicate the sort of planning set-up, and the type of local government reorganization, that I have in mind. The pattern proposed is not uniform for all areas; and if I were to set out in detail the conditions suitable for each part of the country further differences would appear. The general principles, are, however, I hope,

sufficiently clear from the examples adduced. Let me try to summarize them as briefly as I can.

(1) In the areas where no major conurbation exists, I suggest that the principal unit of local administration should be a 'town and country' body, centred on a town, large or small, and carrying on the main functions of Local as distinct from Regional Government. This type of body I call an 'Incorporation'.

(2) In areas where these district or 'incorporated' units are large, I suggest that they should be the general Planning Authorities for their areas. Where they are small, in wealth and population, I suggest that general planning powers shall reside in the County Councils, or in County Planning Authorities, subject to the right to delegate and to the retention of executive planning powers by the 'Incorporations' in matters of mainly local concern.

(3) For the purposes of Regional Planning, I suggest that Counties shall be grouped and Regional Planning Authorities set up with power to make, subject to the requirements of national planning, regional master plans to which the general planning bodies will have to conform. This system is, however, to be subject to modification in areas where there exist major conurbations calling for special treatment.

(4) Each *major* conurbation—at least the 'Big Five' and just possibly one or two more—should be an independent Regional Planning Authority for its own area, liable to be overridden only by the National Planning Authority in accordance with the essential requirements of the national plan.

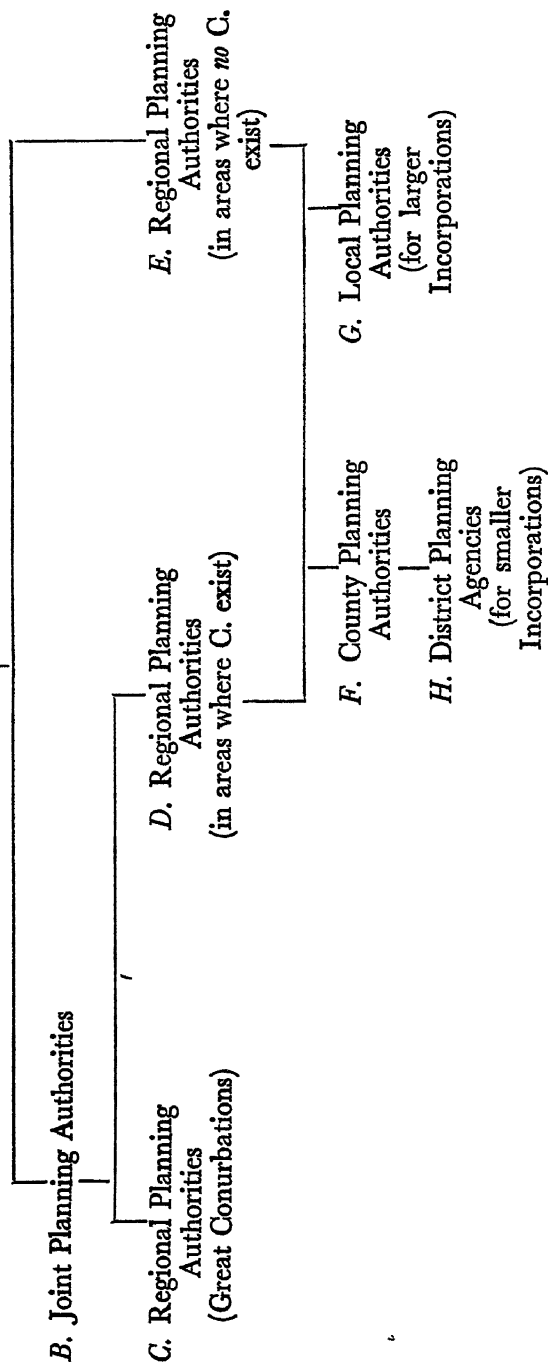
(5) Each conurbation should, however, enter with its neighbours into a Joint Planning Authority, which would have the functions (a) of drawing up by consent a master-plan for the whole area included, subject to the directives of the National Planning Authority, and (b) of acting as the agent of the National Planning Authority in transmitting to its constituent units the requirements of the national plan.

This series of proposals, in its planning aspects only, can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

Table 10

PROPOSED PLANNING MACHINERY—Diagram

A. National Planning Authority



PROPOSED REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

EXAMPLES.

- |    |   |    |  |
|----|---|----|--|
| A. | North-Western Joint Planning Authority (Lancs. and Cheshire). | E. | South-Western R.P.A. (Devon and Cornwall). |
| B. | Merseyside R.P.A.   | F. | Devonshire P.A.                            |
| C. | Lancashire R.P.A. (optional).                                 | G. | Plymouth P.A.                              |
| D. |   | H. | Barnstaple Incorporation.                  |

In the foregoing summary, for the sake of simplicity, I have left out of account not only the special problems of the London area but also those of Yorkshire. The latter presents a special problem because its two largest conurbations are both just on the border-line between such indisputably major conurbations as Birmingham and Manchester and great towns of a more ordinary sort, such as Stoke-on-Trent or Nottingham. The Sheffield conurbation, in the least extended view of it, has about 800,000 people: the Leeds conurbation, excluding the Bradford area, has about 600,000. Bradford, regarded as a separate conurbation, must be credited with about 350,000. The remainder of the West Riding is made up, broadly speaking, of three areas—(1) a manufacturing district, with some coalfield areas interspersed, lying to the south and west of Leeds and Bradford, and including a number of biggish towns and a much larger number of smaller towns and industrial villages, and also a good deal of agricultural land; (2) a coalfield district, also including some manufactures and much agricultural land, lying between and to the east of Sheffield and Leeds; and (3) a mainly agricultural area, stretching right across the north of the West Riding, and having much in common with the area of the North Riding, which it adjoins.

In many ways it would be greatly preferable to detach this northern district from the West Riding and to annex it to the North Riding, with York as the principal city for the whole area. For the moment, however, I am leaving aside all readjustments of county boundaries, and I have therefore grouped the whole of this district of the West Riding together in the Table on page 150 under the name of Ripon. Its largest town is the spa of Harrogate: in all its western area there is no place at all larger than Settle and Sedburgh, which are tiny towns of two or three thousand people.

For the rest, I believe the right solution to be the same as I have proposed for Lancashire—namely, the grouping of the entire area into a number of large ‘town and country’ districts, or ‘Incorporations’, which would become the general planning and administrative authorities for major services. Besides Sheffield, Leeds, and Bradford, and leaving out the Ripon area, I suggest that there should be seven of these; three centred upon Wakefield, Barnsley, and Doncaster, in

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Table 11

## PROPOSED INCORPORATIONS IN THE WEST RIDING

	<i>Approximate Population of existing Municipal Area Thousands</i>	<i>Principal Places Proposed for inclusion in Incorporation</i>	<i>Approximate Population of proposed Incorporation Thousands</i>
SHEFFIELD	525	Rotherham, Mexborough, Rawmarsh 8 other U.D.s and 4 R.D.s	815
LEEDS	500	Pudsey, Rothwell 2 other U.D.s	575
BRADFORD	290	Shipley, Bingley 2 other U.D.s	350
DEWSBURY	50	Batley, Morley, Spenborough 2 other U.D.s	200
WAKEFIELD	60	Pontefract, Castleford, Normanton, Ossett 2 other U.D.s and 2 R.D.s	230
BARNLEY	70	Dearne, Wombwell 9 other U.D.s and 1 R.D.	250
DONCASTER	75	Goole 2 other U.D.s and 3 R.D.s	220
HUDDERSFIELD	125	Colne Valley, Saddleworth, Holmfirth 2 other U.D.s	200
HALIFAX	100	Brighouse, Todmorden, Elland, Sowerby Bridge 2 other U.D.s and 1 R.D.	200
KEIGHLEY	55	Aireborough, Skipton, Barnolds- wick, Ilkley, Otley 1 other U.D. and 1 R.D.	190
RIPON	9	Harrogate, Knaresborough, Settle 3 R.D.s	125

the coalfield area as defined earlier, and four centred upon Dewsbury, Halifax, Huddersfield, and Keighley, in the mainly textile and engineering area. The populations of these suggested Districts, or 'Incorporations', would range only from 250,000 to 190,000; and between them the ten areas (including Sheffield, Leeds, and Bradford) would cover the entire industrial West Riding.

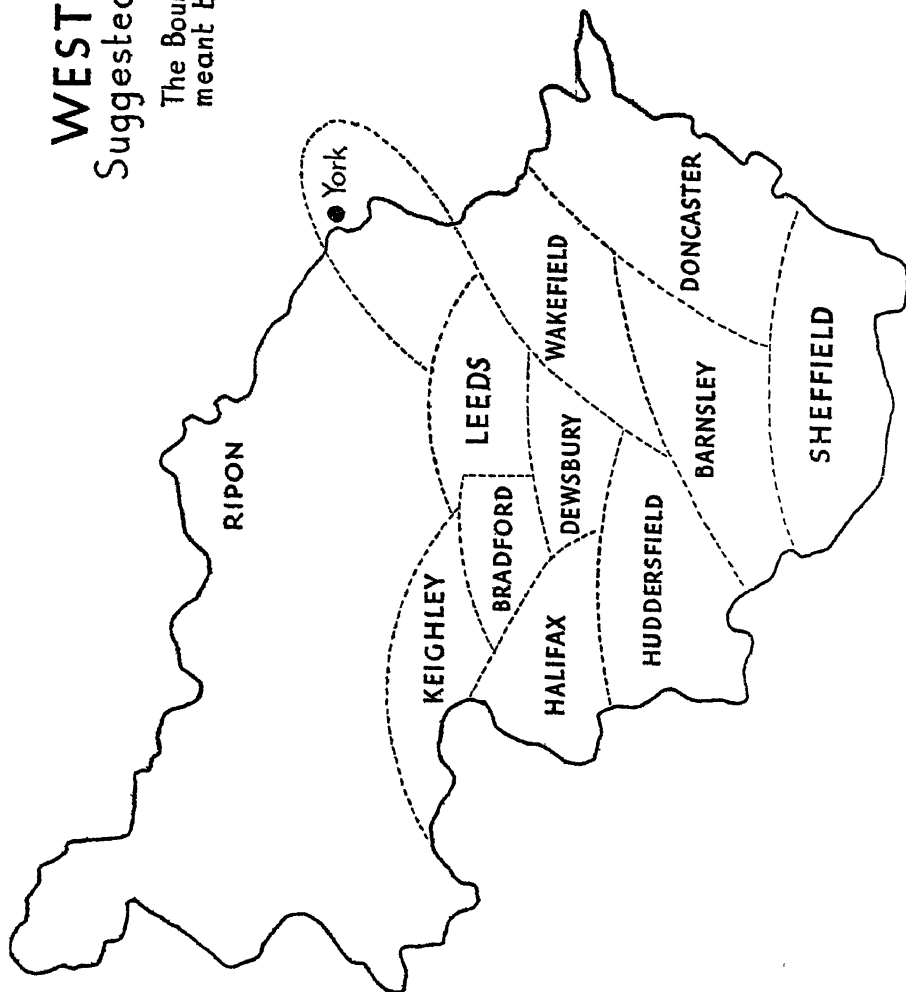
These ten (and Ripon, if the mainly rural area were left in the West Riding) would each have its own Local Planning Authority; and the entire area would have a Regional Planning Authority covering all ten districts, with overriding powers in matters of regional policy. The three Ridings would be linked together by means of a Joint Planning Authority, without overriding powers, except within the limits already defined in relation to the North West. There might be some link between this Joint Authority and the areas in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire which lie close to the Sheffield conurbation in the south of the West Riding.

So far I have been discussing the problem of Regional Planning solely in terms of areas, with a few references to the allocation of powers between the larger and the smaller units. But I have now to attempt to answer a critical question of another sort. What type of regional organization is best suited to undertake the broad planning functions that call for common, co-ordinated action over fairly considerable areas? Should there be directly elected Regional Planning Authorities, chosen by the whole body of electors in the same way as County Councils and County Borough Councils are chosen at present, but for larger, or at any rate for different, areas? Or should the Regional Planning Authorities be built up, as the existing Joint Committees for town and country planning have been, by way of delegation from the Local Authorities of the areas to be included within their scope? Clearly, a great deal turns on the answer that is given to this problem; for there are very great differences between directly and indirectly elected authorities, and the relations between the regional and the local bodies will in practice be likely to work out very differently according to the choice that is made.

The arguments against direct election have been often stated. In the first place, it is contended that the effect would be to put a new kind of Local Authority on top of those already

# WEST RIDING: Suggested Incorporations

The Boundaries are not  
meant to be exact.



in existence, and that the members of County and County Borough Councils would strongly object to having their power and prestige diminished in this way, and to having to take orders from new and untried authorities. It is argued that it would be difficult to secure, for the Regional Authorities, candidates of sufficient standing prepared to devote adequate time to the work, and also that there would be little likelihood of getting from the regional electorate a satisfactory response in terms of interest in, or understanding of, regional issues and policies. These difficulties, it is said, would arise because there exists no widely diffused sense of the unity of the Region as a community with common problems to be faced, no feeling of regional, as distinct from local, loyalty or obligation, and no sufficient point of focus for regional opinion. The electors in regional elections, it is contended, would not know for whom to vote, or be able to bring any effective democratic pressure to bear upon those who secured election.

I do not myself find these arguments very cogent. No doubt, many County or County Borough Councillors—and, still more, many County or County Borough officials—will take very strong objection to the creation of any major authority that will be in any sense “put over their heads”, and will object much more to directly than to indirectly elected bodies because their power is likely in practice to be greater. But the question is not mainly one of the reactions of present Councillors or officials—or rather it should not be, though there is very great danger of such persons’ opinions being given an undue weight. There is in almost any circumstances certain to be a heavy opposition to change from persons whose established positions will be disturbed by it; and such opposition is likely to be almost as fierce where there is no good foundation for it as where it can muster a respectable case in its support. Man is an exceedingly conservative animal, and his conservatism shows itself most of all when he considers that any threat is being offered to his prestige. I venture to predict that, if Regional Authorities based on direct election are set up, within a few years many persons who are now County or County Borough Councillors will be found, having become Regional Councillors, as ardent in defence of their new dignity as they are against its institution to-day.

This, of course, does not make the probable hostility of existing Councillors and officials any less formidable now. Any form of Regionalism—indeed, any fundamental change in the system of Local Government—will be introduced only against the vehement hostility of a large number of persons with interests in, or loyalties to, the existing system. What matters is whether these opponents represent any widespread or keenly felt sentiment among any large section of the people. I do not believe that they do, or that, if a Government tolerably sure of itself were to stand up to them, they would be able to rally more than a façade of opposition. Nor do I believe that the hostility of most of the critics of Regionalism would long survive its institution. The bankers were nearly all about equally convinced in 1931 that it would be sheer ruin to give up the gold standard and, when it had been given up, that it would be sheer ruin to have it back. Men in office are like that.

Even, however, if there would be no widespread *popular* hostility to the introduction of Regional Planning Authorities, would there be any widespread popular support for them? At the outset, probably not; for it must be conceded that the demand for Regional Planning comes only from a few, and has as yet no hold on the popular imagination. This is not because there is in all areas an absence of regional consciousness: on the contrary, there is plenty of evidence that in some regions, though not in all, this consciousness is very much alive. Plenty of people have a quite lively sense of belonging to East Anglia, or to the South-West, or to the North-East, although these Regions do not correspond to any existing institutions of self-government. Plenty of people are very much aware of being Yorkshiremen, or 'Lancastrians', or Londoners, in a broad sense, though in these areas the institutions of Local Government that bear the same names have no correspondence to the unities to which the feeling of community is attached. A man feels as a Yorkshireman, not as a member of a county council-based community (or rather three such communities) excluding York, Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, Halifax and Huddersfield, and a number of other important towns which have become County Boroughs. When a Lancastrian thinks of Lancashire, he does not form a mental picture of the residual area administered by the

Lancashire County Council. And few Londoners think of their London as limited to the area of the 28 Metropolitan Boroughs which make up the area of the London County Council.

The sense of unity and of community, over areas wider than the locality and narrower than the whole country, attaches, in fact, not mainly to areas of Local Government, but to historic groupings, which have in most cases no collective local government functions to-day, though some of them preserve ceremonial functions dating from a great deal farther back. A number of counties are still real units of popular feeling; but this feeling is attached to the geographical counties and not to the areas administered by the County Councils. Moreover, counties are not the only points of focus for loyalties extending beyond a single town or neighbourhood. East Anglia is not a county; but East Anglians do feel some sentiment of belonging to a common group; and so do the men of the North-East, and the dalesmen of Cumberland and Westmorland. Devonians and Cornishmen may bicker, but they have some sense of belonging together; and Wessex survives not only as a novelist's conception, but also in the minds of many Southerners. The Midlands have been called "sodden and unkind"; but their inhabitants are conscious of belonging to a particular Region—or perhaps rather to two Regions—the West Midlands and the East. I am not saying that such feelings affect all people, or are equally strong in all parts of the country, but only that they exist as a foundation on which regional sentiments attached to Regional Planning Authorities could be built—if it were thought expedient to set about building them. I simply do not accept the view that the electors, if they were asked to choose regional representatives by direct election, would be at a loss in exercising their votes or would fail to control the elected persons for want of any conception of regional unity. On the contrary, I believe that, if the regional areas were well chosen, the electorate would feel most of them to possess a good deal more reality than many of the local government areas over which representatives are chosen under the existing conditions.

The difficulty of finding good candidates, in a position to devote adequate time to the work of Regional Planning Authorities is, I admit, serious; but it is no more serious if

the elections are to be direct than if they are to be indirect. Indeed, it is less serious; for indirect election involves calling upon the regional representatives for double service—on both the Regional Authority and the Local Authority which delegates them to it. This point would doubtless have less force if the Regional Authorities were given but little to do, or became in practice a mere façade behind which the real work was carried on by salaried officials; and it may be in the hope that one of these two things may happen that some people argue in favour of the indirect system. I do not deny the shortage of good candidates—for local bodies of all kinds—or that the difficulty grows more acute as the volume of work increases. But this is not a problem peculiar to regional organization or to directly elected bodies; and it calls for remedies, by widening the range of opportunity for public service<sup>1</sup> whether Regional Authorities of any kind are set up or not.

If there is a case for elected agencies to take charge of regional planning, as I have tried to show that there is, surely the method of direct election is greatly to be preferred. It is preferable for precisely the reason for which it is most often objected to by persons connected with the existing local government bodies—that is, because it will endow the Regional Planning Authorities with higher democratic prestige. If we are setting out to create democratic bodies for planning over wide areas, it is much the best course to invite the electors to choose them directly for this purpose, and not for something essentially different. The first requisite for good regional planning is to get men and women who will think in terms of the Region as a unity, and not merely in terms of the particular localities from which they happen to come. To make each regional representative responsible directly, not to the people, but to a local Council which has been chosen to administer the affairs of a particular local area, is to invite parochialism and difference of opinion, and to make as difficult as it can be made the emergence of true regional consciousness, or at any rate of the combination of such consciousness with democratic responsibility. The experience of the actual working of Joint Authorities based on the indirect method shows that they can under some conditions develop a strong regional sentiment

<sup>1</sup> See pages 246 ff.

and follow concerted policies thought out in terms of a whole Region, but I know of no instance where this has happened except in conjunction with an absence of effective responsibility to public opinion. It happens in practice mainly in the administration of technical services, such as water-supply, which do not as a rule arouse either any strong desire on the part of the participating local Councils to scrutinize closely the actions of their delegates, or any large amount of public attention during local elections.

I hold, then, that the Regional Planning Authorities should be directly elected by the whole body of local electors for the constituencies or wards, into which the Regions should be divided. These wards should be so arranged as not to cut across the areas of the smaller bodies included in the Regions, and where possible to coincide with them. Regional elections should, I think, be held on the same day as other local government elections for major authorities; and it should be allowable for a candidate to stand for both regional and local election, resigning his local seat in the event of his choice as a Regional Councillor. The voters would therefore not have to go to the polls on a distinct occasion, except for by-elections caused by these resignations, which would take place in the same way as they do now in the case of vacancies caused by the choice of local Councillors to serve as Aldermen.

The only exception to this principle of direct election would be that of the proposed Joint Planning Authorities, which would be made up of delegates from the Regional Planning Authorities of their constituent areas. I do not propose direct election for these bodies, because I do not suggest giving them power to issue orders to the regional bodies. I do, however, tentatively propose that, wherever a member of a Regional Planning Authority is chosen to serve on a Joint Planning Authority, the electors who chose him as a Regional Councillor shall be entitled to elect directly a Substitute Councillor to serve on the Regional Planning Authority for as long as he continued to serve on the Joint Authority, and that he himself shall rank, by virtue of this service, as an Alderman of the Regional Authority. This will preserve the link between the Joint and Regional Authorities, and will avoid imposing on the members of the Joint Authority the difficult responsibility of both serving

loyally the area as a whole and owing a special duty to a body of local constituents.

I hope I have made it plain that the main function of the Regional Planning Authority will be to prepare master-plans of regional development, including both such matters as are ordinarily regarded as falling within the sphere of Town and Country Planning and a great deal besides. I want it to be concerned fully as much with economic planning as with town and country planning in the narrower sense—that is to say, I want it to cover the local distribution of industries and services within the Region, subject to the general conditions determined by the national economic plan. At the same time, I want it to leave the detailed execution of as much as possible of what it plans to the smaller bodies—the Local Planning Authorities—within its area. Some things must be done, as well as planned, on a regional scale. Many more, even of those that need to be planned regionally, can be best executed locally.

At certain points, but at certain points only—I mean, where they refer to the formation of Districts, or ‘Incorporations’, including both town and country areas—the proposals put forward in the foregoing pages bear some resemblance to a suggestion which has been widely made—namely, that as a relatively simple step towards the creation of better administrative areas, the County Borough shall be taken as the pattern of Local Government, and that the County Councils shall be turned into all-purpose authorities modelled upon them, all the lesser units of local administration being simply abolished, or at most allowed to survive only as shadows, by conversion into district committees of the major authorities. This, of course, is what was done to the Boards of Guardians under the Act of 1929, and to the lesser Local Education Authorities under the Act of 1944. The advocates of this solution usually go on to urge that some of the smaller County Boroughs should be deprived of their present status and thrown into the areas of the County Councils, and also that some of the smaller Administrative Counties should be amalgamated. The effect, it is argued, would be to create all over the country a uniform pattern of Local Government on a scale adequate for the main purposes of town and country planning administration; and it is held that planning over wider areas, where needed,

could be easily effected by joint bodies representing neighbouring authorities.

This solution resembles my own at a few points; but, regarded as a whole, it fills me with horror. Over a very large part of the country, it would amount to the sheer destruction of anything that can properly be called *Local Government*. If we stand in need of larger units for co-ordinated planning, for the administration of certain services which imperatively require regional management, and for the regional supervision of some other services which can be effectively managed over relatively small areas, I am sure we stand fully as much in need of more small-scale Local Government, over areas narrow enough for the contact between the electors and the *elected bodies*, as well as the individual elected persons, to be close and responsible. The principal merit commonly claimed for this proposal—that it would provide in every area a single authority covering the entire range of local government services—is in truth its principal defect, as it is the principal defect of the existing government of our greater towns. I want to see smaller units of administration set up inside the County Boroughs—emphatically not the extension of a centralized system which, bad enough in large towns, would be infinitely worse in scattered country areas. Moreover, the whole question of Regional Planning would be left, under this plan, to indirectly chosen Joint Authorities, subject to no effective control.

There is, however, a great deal to be said for grouping the Administrative Counties which have only small populations into larger units, without therewith destroying all smaller administrative bodies within them. In the Table facing page 160 I have set out side by side the populations of all the English Geographical and Administrative Counties as they were in 1931, at the date of the last Census. The figures are, of course, now badly out of date; but I doubt if the substitution of the most recent figures would make any material difference for the purpose which I have in view; and I have therefore allowed the Census figures to stand unrevised. In this Table the Counties are grouped in order of their administrative populations, except that where a Geographical County has more than one County Council I have taken its administrative population as a whole. The first two columns of

figures show the great disparities, in the more populous Counties, between the total populations and those covered by the County Councils—disparities due, of course, to the exclusion of the County Boroughs from the administrative areas.

The geographical Counties of England range from Lancashire, with 5 million people, and Yorkshire, with 4 millions, to Huntingdonshire, with about 55,000, and Rutland, with fewer than 17,000. Besides the two monsters, only nine have populations of more than a million, and four of these are round London and include large parts of the Greater London area. Two more are swollen by including large parts of the Birmingham conurbation; one, Cheshire, includes considerable parts of both Greater Manchester and Greater Liverpool; and another, Durham, considerable parts of Tyne-side. Hampshire is the only geographical County that exceeds a million inhabitants without the aid of one of the great conurbations; and it owes its populousness mainly to two big towns, Portsmouth and Southampton, which just fail to form a conurbation in the sense given to the term in this book.

On the assumption that the great conurbations will have to receive separate treatment, as I have proposed earlier, it is obviously of no use to take the total populations of the geographical Counties affected by them as a basis for considering the suitability of the county areas to serve as units for Regional Planning. In the Table on page 140, I have shown how the populations of the proposed Regions are affected by subtracting in all appropriate instances the parts of them that would have to be assigned to one or another of the great conurbations, including London. Under this arrangement, one County, Lancashire, would be left with about 3 million people, excluding those living in the Greater Manchester or Merseyside areas. Only 4 others—Hampshire, Yorkshire, Sussex and Gloucestershire—would nearly reach or exceed one million. Four more would have about three-quarters of a million inhabitants, and 9 more about half a million; but there would be 14 with only about a quarter of a million, and 5 with about 100,000 or less, down to Rutland's tiny total of under 20,000.

Columns 3 and 4 (Grouping A) in the main Table show

Table 12

## PLANS FOR COUNTY RE-ORGANIZATION AND REGIONAL GROUPING

	Population		Grouping A.		Grouping B.		Grouping C.		Grouping D.		Grouping D (repeated).		Population	
	G.	A.	G.	A.	G.	A.	G.	A.	G.	A.	G.	A.	G.	A.
LANCASHIRE . . . . .	5,069	1,842												
LONDON . . . . .	4,397	4,397					Add Cheshire . . . . .	6,183	2,517			NORTH-WESTERN . . . . .	6,183	2,517
YORKSHIRE, W.R. 3,352	4,399	1,530					Add Middlesex . . . . .	6,036	6,036			LONDON (L.G.C. and Middlesex) . . . . .	6,036	6,036
" N.R. 469	331		Add York C. . . . .	554 331	Add E. Riding . . . . .	1,087 500	(W.R.) . . . . .	3,352	1,530	Unite Ridings . . . . .	4,399 2,000	YORKSHIRE . . . . .	4,399	2,000
" E.R. 403	189						(N. and E.R.) . . . . .	1,087	500					
" York 85	85													
DERBY . . . . .	1,755	1,199					Add Norfolk and Suffolk . . . . .	2,661	1,833			EAST ANGLIA . . . . .	2,661	1,833
WARWICKSHIRE . . . . .	1,532	352					Group with Staffs. . . . .							
LINCOLN . . . . .	1,195	924					Add Northumberland . . . . .	2,243	1,309			NORTH-EASTERN . . . . .	2,243	1,309
MIDDLESEX . . . . .	1,639	1,639					Group with London . . . . .							
STAFFORDSHIRE . . . . .	1,451	700					Add Warwick, Worcester, Hereford and Salop . . . . .	3,739	1,718			WEST MIDLAND . . . . .	3,739	1,718
KENT . . . . .	1,219	1,194					Add Sussex and Surrey . . . . .	3,170	2,542			SOUTH-EASTERN . . . . .	3,170	2,542
SURREY . . . . .	1,181	948					Group with Kent . . . . .							
CHESHIRE . . . . .	1,144	675					Group with Lancs. . . . .							
HAMPSHIRE, HANTS. 1,014	1,102	469					(Hants) . . . . .	1,102	557	? Add Berks. . . . .	1,413 771	SOUTHERN . . . . .	1,413	771
" I. of W. 88	88				1,102	557								
GLOUCESTERSHIRE . . . . .	791	336					Group with Somerset . . . . .							
SUSSEX, E. 547	770	277												
" W. 223	223				770	500	Group with Kent . . . . .							
DEBESHIRE . . . . .	757	615					Add Notts. . . . .	1,470	1,062	Add Linco. . . . .	2,094 1,517	NORTH MIDLAND . . . . .	2,094	1,517
NORTHUMBERLAND . . . . .	757	405					Group with Durham . . . . .							
DEVONSHIRE . . . . .	733	459					Add Cornwall . . . . .	1,051	777	(Devon and Cornwall) . . . . .	1,051 777	SOUTH-WESTERN . . . . .	1,051	777
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE . . . . .	713	457					Group with Derby . . . . .							
LINCOLNSHIRE, LINCOLN 422	624	263												
" KETTER 110	110				624	465	(Linco.) . . . . .	624	465	Group with Derby . . . . .				
" HOLLAND 92	92													
LANCASTERSHIRE . . . . .	542	303	Add Rutland . . . . .	559 320	Add Northants . . . . .	920 589	(Leic., Northants, Rutland) . . . . .	900 589	? Add Bucks. and Oxon. . . . .	1,401 492	EAST MIDLAND . . . . .	1,401	492	
NORFOLK . . . . .	505	321					Add Suffolk . . . . .	906 634	Group with Essex . . . . .					
SOMERSET . . . . .	470	401					Add Wilts. and Dorset . . . . .	1,012 943	Add Gloucester . . . . .	1,803 1,279	WESTERN . . . . .	1,803	1,279	
WORCESTERSHIRE . . . . .	420	310					Add Salop and Hereford . . . . .	716 666	Group with Staffs. . . . .					
HERFORDSHIRE . . . . .	401	401	Add Bedford . . . . .	602 622	Add Cambs. and Hunts. . . . .	896 896	(Herts., Beds., Cambs., Hunts.) . . . . .	896 896			EASTERN . . . . .	896	896	
SUFFOLK, E. 235	401	207												
" W. 106	106				401	319	Group with Norfolk . . . . .							
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, NORTHANTS 309	361	217												
" SORE 32	32				361	269	Group with Leicester . . . . .							
CORNWALL . . . . .	318	318					Group with Devon . . . . .							
BAKESHIRE . . . . .	311	214	Add Oxon. . . . .	531 343	Group with Bucks. . . . .									
WILTSHIRE . . . . .	303	303	Add Dorset . . . . .	542 542	Group with Somerset . . . . .									
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE . . . . .	271	271					Add Oxon. and Berks. . . . .	792 614	(Bucks, Oxon., Berks.) . . . . .	792 614	? Group Berks. with Hants. ? Group Oxon. and Bucks. with Leicester . . . . .			
CUMBERLAND . . . . .	263	206	Add Westmorland . . . . .	328 271			(Cumberland and Westmorland) . . . . .	328 271			NORTHERN . . . . .	328	271	
SHERBORNE . . . . .	244	244	Add Hereford . . . . .	356 356	Group with Worcester . . . . .									
DORSETSHIRE . . . . .	239	239	Group with Wilts. . . . .											
BEDFORDSHIRE . . . . .	221	221	Group with Herts. . . . .											
CAMBRIDGESHIRE, CAMBS. 140	218	140												
" ELY 78	78		Combine and add Huntingdon . . . . .	274 274	Group with Herts. . . . .									
OXFORDSHIRE . . . . .	210	129	Group with Berks. . . . .											
HERFORDSHIRE . . . . .	112	112	Group with Salop . . . . .											
WESTMORLAND . . . . .	65	65	Group with Cumberland . . . . .											
HUNTINGDONSHIRE . . . . .	56	56	Group with Cambs. . . . .											
RUTLAND . . . . .	17	17	Group with Leicester . . . . .											

G=Geographical Area. A=Administrative Area of County Council. All population figures are for 1931.

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what would be the effect of a scheme which, while leaving the County Boroughs unaffected, would aim at bringing each Administrative County up to a population of at least 250,000. Under such a scheme 7 Counties proper—Rutland, Huntingdonshire, Westmorland, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire and Dorsetshire—and 7 other Administrative Counties—the Isles of Ely and Wight, the Soke of Peterborough, West Suffolk, West Sussex, Kesteven and Holland—would be merged with other areas. Strictly speaking, the East Riding would also be merged; but I have left it as an exceptional case because the North Riding is well above the minimum level without it, and because it is more convenient to discuss the whole problem of Yorkshire separately. Including the East Riding, this scheme would leave in being 34 Administrative Counties, apart from London, instead of the present 48; and only 4 would have populations of less than 300,000, 5 more of less than 400,000, and one more of less than half a million.

If the only purpose in view were that of making the County Councils reasonably efficient instruments for most of their existing functions, this scheme would have everything in its favour. Indeed, it has a great deal in its favour, as one element in a more comprehensive plan of local government reform. I believe that these small County Councils ought to be amalgamated for purposes of general administration: but it is sufficiently plain that no amalgamation of this sort would bring into existence bodies which, even in association with the County Boroughs falling geographically in each group, could effectively carry out the functions of co-ordinated regional planning. They would be simply bigger County Councils, not in any real sense *regional* authorities.

The next group of columns (Grouping B) shows the effect of carrying the process a stage further, so as to constitute areas with a population, outside the County Boroughs, of at least half a million. One exception has been allowed to this minimum—Cumberland and Westmorland—because of the highly distinctive character of these counties. This scheme would involve the merging of 8 more Counties—the East Riding (with the North), Cornwall (with Devonshire), Suffolk (with Norfolk), Wiltshire (with Somerset and Dorset), Shropshire (with Worcestershire and Herefordshire), Cambridgeshire (with Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Hertfordshire),

Berkshire (with Bucks and Oxon), and Northamptonshire (with Leicester and Rutland). This further list has only to be read to tell the reader that it would arouse very strong passions—very much stronger than would be aroused by the more modest plan. The people of Cornwall would, I feel sure, offer most vigorous resistance to the merging of their County Council with that of Devonshire; and perhaps the people of Devonshire would feel not much less strongly than their neighbours. There would be similar sentiments in many of the other Counties affected; and it is hardly possible to believe that Parliament would pass any Act likely to arouse these vigorous sentiments of opposition. I think we may dismiss as impracticable any scheme of actual amalgamation going much further than my Grouping A.

Yet, in relation to co-ordinated planning on a regional basis, the units suggested in Grouping B are not too large, but mostly too small. Grouping B is in fact neither the one thing nor the other: it is suitable neither for local government administration nor for co-ordinated planning. Let us see what happens if we go on a stage further—for planning purposes only, for we have already gone clearly beyond the *optimum* for purposes of general administration. The next group of columns (Grouping C) still keeps the same minimum level of population—half a million—but attempts to widen the areas of Grouping B in such a way as to bring them better into line with the needs of regional planning. It involves no proposal for amalgamation—only for grouping for certain defined purposes. It is, in effect, an attempt to define *minimum* Regions for co-ordinated planning of the type envisaged in previous chapters. It throws Middlesex in with London, Cheshire in with Lancashire, Northumberland in with Durham, and Nottinghamshire in with Derbyshire; and it makes single groups in the West Midlands (Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Salop); in the South-East (Kent, Sussex and Surrey); in East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex), in the West (Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wilts and Dorset), over and above the groups contemplated in Grouping B. It still, however, leaves Lincolnshire and Hampshire to stand alone; and it still leaves the West Riding separate from the rest of Yorkshire.

It would be possible to stop at this point, and to have a

quite tolerable basis for regional organization, apart from the problem of the great conurbations, which at this stage of the argument I am leaving out of account, and apart also from the obvious necessity of bringing in the County Boroughs in one way or another. I think, however, that it would be preferable to advance a stage further still—to what is suggested in the next group of columns (Grouping D) and repeated in the final group of columns with a tentative regional nomenclature. This further stage involves bringing together for planning purposes (*a*) all three Ridings of Yorkshire, and (*b*) Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire, to form a North Midland Group. I also suggest, with less certainty, grouping Berkshire with Hampshire (despite obvious difficulties in the way of severing North Berkshire from Oxfordshire), and Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire with Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland in an East Midland Region. In the alternative Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire could be allowed to remain as a separate group.

This arrangement would yield, omitting London for the moment, either 13 or 14 large areas over which some form of Planning Authority would be required. In most of these, my proposal is for a directly elected Regional Planning Authority covering the entire area. Where, however, a great conurbation exists, it would constitute a separate Regional Planning Authority, and there would have to be both a Joint Planning Authority for the whole area and one or more Regional Planning Authorities for the parts of the area outside the great conurbations. Thus, in the North-West, there could be either separate directly elected authorities for Lancashire and Cheshire, or a single authority covering both; and in Yorkshire there might be either separate authorities for the Ridings, or perhaps two authorities covering the three, or a single directly elected body for all the Ridings, including in any case the Sheffield and Leeds areas as well as the rest of the county. In all the other Regions, a single directly elected Regional Planning Authority should be enough, linked in the West Midlands with the Greater Birmingham, and in the North-East with the Tyneside authority. The East Anglian, Eastern, East Midland, Southern and South-Eastern Regional Planning Authorities would all need to be represented with Greater London on a Home Counties Joint Planning Authority.

Any Region would be free to set up a Joint Authority with any other, for such problems as they may have in common—*e.g.* the Western and South-Western Regions, or the Northern and North-Eastern Regions, or the three Midland Regions. The whole plan is meant to be flexible, and not to exclude the representation of a particular Region on more than one Joint Planning Authority.

I have already urged that the Regional Planning Authorities should be directly chosen by the whole body of electors, not on a separate occasion, but at the same time as the major Local Authorities within the Regions, and in such a way as not to deprive regional candidates of their chance of election for a local body, should they fail to secure election for the Region. I shall come back later to this question of the method of election: I mention it now, only because objection is so often taken to the proposal to constitute directly elected regional bodies on the ground that it would involve bringing the electors too often to the poll—or failing to bring them there because they would refuse to come.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT: AREAS AND POWERS

IN this chapter, I propose first to look more closely at the general problem of Local Government inside the great conurbations which I have proposed should become unified under Regional Authorities covering their entire built-up areas—where possible, with a surrounding belt of country. Any one of them, except London, which presents highly special problems, will serve almost equally well as an example. I propose to take Manchester.

Greater Manchester, as I have defined it in an earlier chapter, embraces an area with a population of roughly a million and three-quarters. It includes three existing County Boroughs—Manchester, Salford and Stockport—eleven other Boroughs, and a large number of Urban Districts, besides certain areas now included in Rural Districts to the south and east. I am sure it would be entirely the wrong policy to abolish all these existing units of Local Government, and to put the whole area under the entire control of a single elected Council. The effect of such a destruction of existing democratic tissue would be, in establishing a form of Regional Government, to abolish Local Government in any real sense of the term, and to provide the citizens with what might be a greatly superior instrument for planning their common affairs, but would be at the same time no instrument at all for enabling them to govern themselves in a host of important matters of predominantly local concern. Bureaucrats may stress the advantages of having everything in a single hand; and if we were setting out to reform Local Government for their convenience we should doubtless pay attention to their pleas. If, however, we wish Local Government to serve both as means to self-government for the ordinary citizen and as a school of self-government for the democracy as a whole, we must find ways of linking large and small units harmoniously

# PROPOSED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN GREATER MANCHESTER

County Boroughs		For suggested new areas, see text, page 168			Population ooo's
MANCHESTER	SALFORD	STOCKPORT			
Other Existing Boroughs		Pob. ooo's	Proposed New Boroughs	Pob. ooo's	Areas Incorporated in Boroughs
Middleton	30				
Prestwich	33				
Swinton	41				
Eccles	43		Worsley	25	
Stretford	59		Urmston and Irlam	48	
Sale	38				
Altrincham	38		Cheadle	28	Hale 11, Bowden 3, Lymm 6
			Hazel Grove	18	Wilmslow 15, Alderley Edge 3
Hyde	31				Bredbury and Romiley 16, Marple 12
Dukinfield	19				
Stalybridge	23				Longdendale 5
Ashton-under-Lyne	48		Denton and Droylsden	47	
Mossley	11				Lees 5, Limehurst 8

together, so as neither to forgo the advantages of large-scale organization, where they can be shown to exist, nor to depart from the presupposition that the scale of government ought always to be as small as can be made compatible with reasonably efficient service.

I suggest, then, in the first place, that neither Salford nor Stockport should be asked to give up its identity on becoming a part of Greater Manchester, any more than Westminster gave up its identity when it became a part of London. Let Salford and Stockport keep their Charters and, if they wish, their Mayors and mayoral chains. Let them keep their Corporations and their common seals, and therewith enough powers of Local Government to make the retention real, and not merely a matter of pomp or ceremony. I go further. I want most of the non-County Boroughs which are to be included in Greater Manchester to keep their Charters, Corporations, and enough powers to make them real units of Local Government after the change. The difference is that in their case I want their frontiers to be widened to take in many areas which are at present separate Urban Districts, or parts of Rural Districts, and that in a few instances it would be possible to propose amalgamations of neighbouring Boroughs into single Boroughs, of the new type; but I have preferred in every case to let existing Boroughs remain. In other instances I have suggested amalgamations of neighbouring Urban Districts to form Boroughs within the new Greater Manchester Region. The accompanying Table shows what is proposed, with very approximate population figures. It is not possible to make the figures precise, as large changes are taking place in the distribution of population between inner and outer Manchester.

It will be seen that, apart from the areas of the three County Boroughs, I propose that the area of Greater Manchester outside the three existing County Boroughs should be divided among 17 Boroughs, ranging in population from about 60,000 to about 20,000. Of these, 9 are existing Boroughs with their areas unchanged, 3 more are existing Boroughs enlarged, and the remaining 5 are either existing Urban Districts or combinations of Urban Districts. This grouping is, of course, only tentative, and by way of elucidation of my general meaning. Very likely it could be improved

upon; for example, Wythenshawe, Manchester's latest outlier, built by the City Council between Sale and Altrincham as a new kind of Garden Suburb, may need recognition as one of the new Boroughs. But changes of this sort would not affect the argument. All that I am definitely putting forward is that there should be, within the great conurbation, manageably small units of Local Government, and that these should be based as far as possible on existing administrative areas.

It would be an evident anomaly to provide for small units of Local Government in the areas outside the existing County Boroughs, and to do nothing to provide for it inside these monsters. Accordingly, I should like to see a revival of some of the small towns and districts that have been absorbed into municipal Manchester and into the two lesser County Boroughs. I do not pretend to know how precisely the frontiers of these new Boroughs ought to be drawn, or what historic names should be revived for them; but suppose them to coincide roughly, in the cases of Manchester and Salford, with the 13 parliamentary constituencies into which these two places are at present divided, or with such revised constituencies as may emerge from the redistribution that is now being made. Adding 2 Boroughs for at present undivided Stockport, we should get 15 new Boroughs to add to the 17 in the surrounding area—a total of 32 Borough Councils with an average population of, say, 55,000 persons, to which would be assigned within the conurban Region such local government powers as can be conveniently exercised on a small scale and would serve to bring a sense of local self-government into the smaller communities which are without it at present, and to reconcile those which have it to the surrender of a part of their powers to the new Regional Authority of the conurbation as a whole.

What are the powers that could appropriately be retained by these smaller bodies? Something has been said in a previous chapter<sup>1</sup> to give a general indication of what I have in mind. They are meant to be mainly powers that concern people living together within a limited area, by virtue of their neighbourhood, and they are *not* meant to be restricted to powers which are already included in all cases within the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III

ordinary routine of local government services. Among them are, beyond question, the control of the Community Centre, or Centres, within their areas; of Civic Restaurants, and of playing-fields; the acting as managers of local schools and institutions; some voice in the conduct of local Health Centres, Infant Welfare Clinics, Day Nurseries, and similar places; a share in the control of local Housing Estates, and in the supervision of local property and the enforcement of by-laws relating to it; the care of the streets, and the collection (though not the disposal) of refuse, and other local sanitary services; the provision of additional amenities, and the granting of aid for this purpose to voluntary agencies—for example, the provision of swimming-pools, or of open-air or barn theatres, or additional Community Centres or Civic Restaurants, either 'on their own', or in association with the Regional Authority; and, last but not least, the providing of a forum for the continual discussion of both local and regional public affairs, and the placing of their views before their representatives on the Regional Authority and before the Authority itself.

Over and above these direct functions, it should be open for the new Boroughs to ask that any local function exercised by the Regional Authority should be delegated to them, but not of course necessarily to have their request granted. Correspondingly, the Regional Authority should be free to delegate functions to the 'Boroughs'—not necessarily the same to all—of its own instance, or to share its powers with them in any convenient way and to use them freely as its agents in carrying on the services placed in its charge. What is needed is a flexible system, under which a variety of experiments can be tried out, and powers can be apportioned in varying ways to meet the conditions of different areas.

If this system is good for the great conurbations I see every reason to suppose that it will be equally good for other big towns. Under the plan of reform outlined in previous chapters, most of the existing County Boroughs will undergo enlargement by the taking in both of their extra-municipal suburbs and of a belt of surrounding country. Nottingham, for example, would be increased from about 280,000 inhabitants to about 480,000 by taking in 6 neighbouring Urban Districts and a number of other places in the Rural Districts around it. I should suggest that the bigger of these places should retain

their separate identities, as 'Boroughs' of this new type, and that Nottingham itself should be divided internally in the same way as I have proposed for Manchester and the other great conurbations. Round municipal Nottingham as it now is, new Boroughs could be based on Eastwood, Hucknall, Arnold, Carlton, West Bridgford, and Beeston—all existing Urban Districts—and possibly additional Boroughs would be needed to cover parts of the Basford and Bingham rural areas. In inner Nottingham, the four existing parliamentary constituencies could be used, or alternative areas devised, so as to yield an appropriate number of 'neighbourhood' Boroughs corresponding to existing ties of local community.

It would be tedious to multiply examples. What I have said of Nottingham holds good for most other cities of comparable size. The question is, Down to what size is it desirable to proceed with this breaking up of big towns into more manageable neighbourhood units of purely local administration? I do not think the answer can be given exclusively in terms of population. Some existing big towns have simply grown outwards from a single centre, whereas others have grown partly by absorbing neighbouring small towns or large villages whose local government existence they have swept away. I hold that, in the new extended town and country areas which I want to see established, all newly absorbed towns, urban districts, or considerable villages must be allowed to retain their administrative identity, with enough local powers to give them a basis for continued activity, subject only to the possibility that in some cases better units may be secured by amalgamation of neighbours. Over and above this, where the nucleus town is of considerable size *and* contains within it old centres of population which retain some civic consciousness of their identity, I feel sure there is everything to be said for allowing them, if their inhabitants wish, to set up on their own, as 'Boroughs' within the City, or perhaps in some cases as mere 'Districts' with only delegated powers. Where, on the other hand, a big town has simply grown, and there are no real smaller communities within it, I have no wish to break it up as a matter of principle; for the smaller groupings will work well only where there is, or can be created, a real sense of local community for them to represent.

In the small town and country areas, with little market

towns as their centres and only villages in their outlying districts, the principle which I am advocating would be applied by allowing the villages to retain their Parish Councils, within the enlarged municipal limits of the new Boroughs, and by allowing the little towns, where they so desired, to set up Parish Councils of their own—one or more, as might seem to them best, to carry on lesser functions of Local Government varying from place to place according to local conditions. Parish Meetings could continue to be held, and to undertake simple functions, in villages which did not wish to maintain separate Councils, and there should be a continuing possibility of establishing Parish Councils, even if they were not called for at first, at all events in villages or groups of villages exceeding a certain minimum population. The aim should be to give the Parish Councils considerably greater functions than they have at present, not only by enlarging their powers, but also by providing a wide discretionary right of delegation in the hands of the major authorities.

Under the system here proposed, the following main changes would take place in the structure of Local Government, as distinct from Regional Government, outside the areas which it is proposed to assign to the greatest conurbations:

(1) The principal unit of administration would be an 'Incorporation', centred as a rule upon a town or city, large or small, but including also suburban and peripheral rural areas, in such a way that the entire country outside the great conurbations would be divided up into units of this type. Some of these units would be almost wholly urban, whereas others would be mainly rural and would cover much larger and more sparsely peopled areas.

(2) For planning purposes, and for such other purposes as call for large-scale organization or administration, the 'Incorporations' would be grouped into larger units, on the lines laid down in Chapter VII.

(3) Within each 'Incorporation', large or small, there would be, wherever the inhabitants of a particular district wished to set them up, smaller units of Local Government, 'Boroughs' in the big cities and for the smaller towns, 'Parishes' in the smaller places, with both directly administrative and delegated powers varying from case to case.

(4) The existing distinction between County Boroughs, non-County Boroughs, and Urban Districts would disappear. Most of the existing County Boroughs and some of the non-County Boroughs would become the centres of new town-and-country 'Incorporations'—that is, of major units of Local Government exercising general powers, but containing smaller units within them. Some Urban Districts, or groups of neighbouring Urban Districts, would also become 'Incorporations'. Other Boroughs and Urban Districts, including a few County Boroughs, would be merged into 'Incorporations' centred upon their larger neighbours. These would in the great majority of instances retain their identity as 'Boroughs' within the new 'Incorporations', but with reduced powers.

(5) Rural Districts would disappear, except where an existing Rural District received the status of a 'Borough' within one of the new 'Incorporations'. Parish Councils, on the other hand, would remain; and perhaps some Rural Districts would be reconstituted as Parishes instead of being broken up. The Parishes would function as units of small-scale Local Government within the 'Incorporations', exercising both direct and delegated powers, and also acting as agents of the larger authorities.

(6) County Councils, subject to some amalgamations, would retain their existence as Planning Authorities, and for the direct exercise of such administrative functions as might be assigned to them. These functions would differ considerably from case to case. Where the 'Incorporations' were large, most of the tasks of administration would fall to them, rather than to the County Councils, and the latter would become mainly planning and co-ordinating bodies. In such areas, it would be open to the County Councils of neighbouring Counties to amalgamate into united bodies; and such amalgamation might be made compulsory in Counties below a certain minimum population.

(7) The areas of County Boroughs would not longer be excluded automatically from the jurisdiction of the County Councils, only the greatest conurbations ranking as separate Regions. The remaining County Boroughs, merged in the new 'Incorporations', would in general be subject to county authority in respect of planning and other services calling for administration or co-ordination over large areas. The

degree of this authority would of course have to be defined separately in respect of each major service; and some large County Boroughs, existing in areas where most towns are quite small—*e.g.* Plymouth or Norwich—would be given a special position in relation to regional planning and administration.

Obviously, in this scheme, a great deal depends on the nature of the proposed town-and-country Boroughs, or 'Incorporations', which I am proposing to make the principal 'general purposes' Local Authorities throughout the country. Examples have been given in previous chapters from a number of counties in order to show what sort of areas I have in mind. The question is, indeed, relatively simple both in agricultural counties such as Norfolk and Devonshire and in thickly industrialized districts such as most of Lancashire and the West Riding. It is not nearly so simple where industrial, agricultural, tourist and residential districts exist side by side, and where the towns are both numerous and unevenly spaced in relation to the rest of the area. Take, for example, Kent. The north-western corner of the county, including Bromley, Beckenham, Chislehurst, Sidcup, Penge, Orpington, Dartford, Bexley, Erith, Crayford, the Crays, and, I think, Gravesend, Northfleet, Swanscombe, and perhaps one or two other areas, belongs to Greater London, and should be attached to the Greater London conurbation, the structure of which we have still to consider. These areas have a combined population of about 565,000, leaving about 87,000 for the rest of the county. In the area outside Greater London, there are one small County Borough, Canterbury (26,000), no fewer than 17 non-County Boroughs, and 9 Urban Districts, and about a quarter of a million persons living in the Rural Districts. This last group includes a quite considerable residential population, besides those engaged in agriculture and other country pursuits.

Of the 17 existing Boroughs, three—Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham—form together the small conurbation of Medway Towns, with a combined population of about 160,000. These should clearly be brought together as a single 'Incorporation', which would include also a surrounding belt of countryside and suburb. Next in size is the county town,

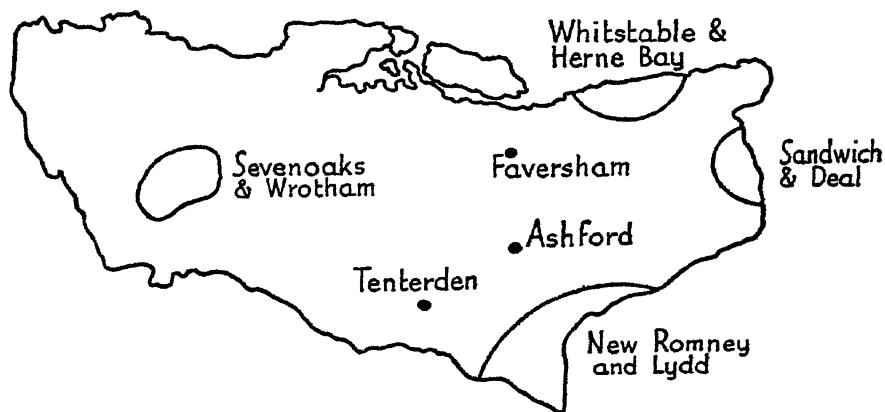
## LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Maidstone, with rather fewer than 50,000 inhabitants and a great many more in its near neighbourhood. Two other Boroughs—Dover and Folkestone—exceed 40,000; and Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe form in effect a single town, with from 55,000 to 60,000 people, including those in the country belt. Sheerness, Queenborough, Sittingbourne and Milton Regis form another developing town, already of about 40,000 people; of its constituents only Queenborough, the smallest, is at present a Borough. In the south-west of the county lies yet another small conurbation, made up of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells and the Urban Districts of Tonbridge and Southborough, with a combined population of about 60,000. In the north-east corner Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate form a similar group, with about 85,000 people; and of those two are Boroughs, and Broadstairs, which lies between them, is an Urban District.

These are all the towns of considerable size. They give us, as a starting point, 7 evidently suitable 'Incorporations'—the Medway Towns, Maidstone, Dover, Folkestone-Hythe, Sheerness-Queenborough, Tonbridge, and the Thanet Towns. Canterbury, though smaller, must clearly join the group. We have now a county pattern like this:



The remaining towns of some importance are scattered as follows:



Of these places, the Sevenoaks-Wrotham group is possibly, but not certainly, assignable to Greater London. I have tentatively left it out of the Greater London area; and if it is left out, it clearly forms the centre of a town-and-country area covering the west of the county north of the Tunbridge Wells area. To the east of Tunbridge Wells lies a large rural area, with no considerable town in it, but with tiny Tenterden, which is already a Borough, as its obvious centre. To the north-east of this district lies a similar rural area, centred upon Ashford, which is a populous Urban District of nearly 23,000. To the north of the Ashford district is another mainly rural area, with the Borough of Faversham as its natural centre. This leaves only three districts, all mainly concerned with the tourist trade—the Whitstable-Herne Bay area north of Canterbury, the Sandwich-Deal-Walmer area between Thanet and Dover, and the New Romney-Lydd area right in the south of the county.

This gives a total of 15 'Incorporations', dividing up the county among them, and varying in populousness from over 160,000 in the Medway Towns down to a mere 10,000 or so in the Romney Marsh area—which has, however, too distinctive a character not to be left 'on its own'. More than half of the total number of 'Incorporations' would range from 60,000 to 40,000.

# LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Table 14  
PROPOSED INCORPORATIONS IN KENT  
(*excluding Greater London area*)

<i>Population</i>	
Over 100,000	Medway Towns
„ 75,000	Thanet Towns, Maidstone
„ 60,000	Tunbridge Towns
„ 50,000	Folkestone-Hythe, Sevenoaks, Ashford, Sandwich-Deal
„ 40,000	Dover, Sheerness-Queenborough, Canterbury
„ 30,000	Faversham, Whitstable
„ 20,000	Tenterden
„ 10,000	Romney Marsh

Now, areas of this sort of population-size are big enough to carry on effectively many of the functions of Local Government; but there are some functions for which they are definitely too small, as well as others for which they are no less definitely too large. They are not, for example, big enough to serve effectively as Local Education Authorities in charge of the whole range of educational provision, even short of the University. They are too small to be put in charge of either secondary or technical education; and it is now pretty generally agreed that, subject to some measures of devolution, elementary and higher education are best organized over the same areas, and not divided between different authorities. Accordingly, it is evidently out of the question to constitute each of these 'Incorporations' as a separate Local Education Authority, and much better to leave education, as it is to-day, a County service, organized by a single body over the entire area (including the County Borough of Canterbury).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the new National Health Service, manifestly the hospital and consultant parts will need to be organized at least on a County basis; and, as we have seen already, the County will be also the general Planning Authority, unless it voluntarily transfers its planning powers to the larger Region of which it is to be a section. Thus, in such a County as Kent, the 'Incorporations' will be much more like non-County than like County Boroughs in powers and functions; but they will

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII.

be unlike Boroughs of the existing kind because they will have inside them smaller authorities, both urban and rural. On the one hand, the 'Incorporations' will possess direct and independent powers of their own, and on the other they will be acting as delegates, or as agents, of the County Authority. Similarly, the smaller authorities within the 'Incorporations' will have this dual character, doing some things independently and in their own right, others under powers delegated by the 'Incorporations', and yet others as the 'Incorporations' agents.<sup>1</sup>

Take a simple area—say, the Isle of Thanet—which it is proposed should become a single 'Incorporation'. This area would, of course, send representatives to the Kent County Council. Itself, it would have a directly elected Council for the entire 'Incorporation'. Within its area would be three 'Boroughs'—Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs—free, if they wished, to retain their separate Borough Councils (for we are proposing to abolish the difference of status between Boroughs and Urban Districts). Besides these three there would be the rest of Thanet—Westgate, Birchington, Sarre, Minster, Ebbsfleet, and the pure countryside. All this remaining area would be free, if it wished, to form itself into a single Parish, with its own Council; or Westgate, or Birchington, or any place down to a certain minimum size could have its own separate Parish Council, with small, but significant, independent powers, and the right to act as delegate or agent of the 'Incorporation' in any matter which the Council of that body might agree to entrust to it.

Some people will argue that this system allows for too many authorities operating within a single not very extensive area. I have no wish for them to be so many—unless the inhabitants so desire; but I want the inhabitants to judge what suits them best—and to retain the right to change their minds, so that, if they decide to have a Council now, they need not keep it for ever, or, if they decide against one now, they are not prevented from getting one later on, should they come to feel differently about the matter. Let the citizens of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs decide whether to keep their separate Councils or to merge them completely in the 'Thanet Incorporation'. Let the people of Westgate decide

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII

whether to join the people of Margate, or to become a 'Parish' on their own, or to be simply part of the Parish of Thanet outside the main urban area. Let Minster and Sarre and Ebbsfleet decide whether to be separate Parishes or one. But let none of these decisions be irrevocable. Let the people try diverse experiments, and see how they like them, within a satisfactory general framework; and let them be free to scrap an experiment if they do not like it, and to try another in its stead.

Moreover, let the experiments be tried in respect of powers, as well as of areas. There is no reason why the extent and content of 'delegation' from larger to smaller authorities should not vary widely from place to place. In order to ensure this, it will be necessary not to leave the question to be settled entirely at the discretion of the delegating authorities, which may have too great a bias in favour of keeping matters in their own hands. There will have to be some definition by law of the powers which are to be normally open to delegation, and of others which are to be 'delegable' at the sole discretion of the delegating body; and for powers falling within the first of these groups there will have to be some Tribunal—probably a Standing Tribunal set up by the appropriate Minister, to which the smaller authority can appeal. This Tribunal, where it rejects delegation, in the full sense, will have to be free to recommend agency—that is, that the smaller authority shall be allowed to manage certain things as the agent of the greater, and under its direction. The result will not be a tidily uniform system, either over the whole country or within any single Region; but in my view that is nothing against it. It is rather very much in its favour, as more likely to secure a system that will meet varying local needs, and conform to varying local wishes. Above all, it will be flexible, without too much pother about the making of any changes that may be called for.

The size, in terms of population, of the areas which I have designated as 'Incorporations' differs very greatly from county to county in the districts which have been studied by way of sample of the country as a whole. They are largest in the West Riding, where, apart from the three biggest, they range from about 250,000 to about 125,000. In Lancashire, omitting the great conurbations, the range is from 250,000 down to as

little as 40,000 in the sparsely populated Northern part of the county, and down to 75,000 in the industrial area. In Kent, leaving out the Medway Towns, the range is from 85,000 to 10,000: in Devonshire, leaving out Plymouth, from 120,000 to about 10,000. In Norfolk the typical size is a good deal smaller than in any of the others—from Norwich's 150,000 and Great Yarmouth's 80,000 down to only a few thousands in most of the agricultural districts. These variations are neither avoidable nor regrettable: they follow naturally from the different demographic characteristics of the areas concerned, and, in part, from their different administrative histories.

It is, however, evident that 'Incorporations' varying so greatly in population—and, of course, not less but even more in rateable value—cannot all exercise even approximately uniform powers. I have already drawn, for purposes of planning, the distinction between large and small districts—that is 'Incorporations'—and have proposed that, whereas the larger should be general *Local* Planning Authorities in their own right, the smaller should act, in planning matters, only as agents of the Regional Planning Authority. I do not suggest that there should be, either for planning or for other purposes, a fixed population limit dividing these two groups of 'Incorporations'. The question will need to be settled separately for each area, as part of the process of drawing up an appropriate regional scheme. Similarly, other powers of Local Government will have to differ as between large and small 'Incorporations', without any rigid line being drawn in terms of population alone.

In general, the larger the 'Incorporation', the greater will need to be its independence of the County Authority. I do not, however, believe that, apart from the very greatest conurbations, any areas, however populous, should be wholly exempted from county jurisdiction or from making a financial contribution to general county purposes. Thus, I definitely want to put the County Boroughs, for some purposes, back inside the Administrative Counties, and to give their inhabitants direct representation on the County Authority, and the County Authority the right to levy a rate upon them for common county purposes.

The financial aspects of this proposal will be considered in a subsequent chapter. At this stage I am concerned only

with the distribution of powers. One way of dealing with the question would be to provide for the creation, within the larger counties, of groups of neighbouring 'Incorporations' large enough to exercise more powers than could be effectively exercised by each of them acting alone. In general, however, it seems unwise to complicate the scheme in such a way. What is needed in respect of common action by neighbours—for example, in the case of the tourist resorts in such counties as Norfolk and Devonshire—can be done by the creation of Joint Authorities on a basis of indirect election, unless the places concerned prefer complete amalgamation into unified 'Incorporations', such as I have suggested for the Thanet Towns and for Great Yarmouth and its immediate neighbours.

Accordingly, the general structure which I have in mind will retain the County, reinforced by the inclusion of the County Boroughs for a number of common purposes, as a highly important area of administration; but the County Authorities will have much less to do where, as in the West Riding of Yorkshire or in Lancashire, the 'Incorporations' are big and well able to manage their own affairs than in areas where towns are small, and each serves in effect only a small population in the town and in the countryside surrounding it. In Regions of the former type, the County Authority will tend to be mainly a Planning Authority, concerned also with the common administration of a very few major services; whereas in the Regions of sparse population the County will necessarily remain the principal responsible body over a large part of the whole field of Local Government.

I do not want to be precise about this. I possess no particular qualification for making recommendations about the detailed apportionment of local functions between one type of authority and another. I am a Regionalist and at the same time a keen believer in *local* self-government; and I am trying to suggest the outline of a scheme for reconciling the claims of large- and small-scale administration to persons who know from experience far more about the detailed requirements than I do. I can only throw out the ideas; it must be for others to work out the details, if such elaboration is deemed worth while. I am not, however, prepared to accept the answer that is so often made to anyone who, not

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT: AREAS AND POWERS

being himself an administrator engaged in the day-to-day practice of Local Government, ventures to propose any changes in the existing system—namely, that no one who does not fully know the details and the ‘ropes’ can have any claim to be heard. On the contrary, I have listened to so many of those who have all the details at their fingertips, either asserting categorically that no major change is possible, or affirming dogmatically that the only suitable reform is one that will make all other types of Local Authority conform exactly to the type which they themselves know best, as almost to have reached the conclusion that no workable plan of reform is to be looked for except from someone who is able to stand outside the whole affair, and to look at it rather in its relations to the whole problem of government and democracy than in its more technical aspects. Perhaps neither approach will get us anywhere; but certainly the least hopeful line is to gather the professional practitioners of Local Government together, and to invite them to draw up an agreed plan.

## GREATER LONDON

How, we must now ask, does Greater London fit in with the projects of local government and regional reform that have been outlined in the foregoing chapters? The most obvious answer is that Greater London fits in very badly with *any* plan whatsoever, and that for a perfectly plain reason—its excessive size. Even the most ardent advocates of dispersal do not really plan to bring either Inner or Outer London down to the size they think best; for it is impracticable even to contemplate a migration drastic enough to achieve this result. A William Morris, composing a personal Utopia, may feel able to reduce the density of London's housing as much as he pleases, and to give over a large part of the built-up area to fertile fields. A Richard Jefferies may go further and picture the entire site as a stagnant and miasmic swamp, where no human being is left alive, save the adventurous voyager who plunges, in *After London*, into its pestilential desolation. The practical planner cannot let his imagination have so much play; even if he outdoes Sir Patrick Abercrombie in the will to 'disperse, he is bound to leave in London a great many people whom he would like to wish elsewhere.

So London, being a misfit anyway, is bound to give trouble when we try to fit it into any plan we may deem good for the country as a whole. Let us not, however, forget even for a moment that, though all the planners want fewer people to live in Greater London, the *prima facie* evidence all makes in favour of the belief that the views of the planners and of the people for whom they are planning are not the same. The growth of Greater London is itself *prima facie* evidence that people who live there do not want to go away, and that a good many people who have not been living there do wish to move in. For what reasons this is so is, of course, much in dispute. Some argue that people are drawn towards London

in pursuit of jobs, or of better or better-paid jobs, and that the main attraction is in this sense *economic*. Others argue that the glamour of London draws from all over the country many of those who have no deep roots elsewhere, and that the main attraction is not economic, but *social*, in this special sense. Of course, everyone agrees that both factors are at work, and that they interact: the only dispute is about the relative weights to be assigned to them.

The attraction, whatever its causes, is a plain fact. What right, then, have we to attempt to stop the growth of London, if London, or its near neighbourhood, is where a growing number of people want to live? Clearly none at all, unless we can give good reason for standing in their way. One line of reasoning rests on arguing that what people really want is not London, but a number of attractions which London offers, and other places do not—at any rate in the same measure—a wide choice of congenial friends and acquaintances, of amusements and amenities of all sorts, and of jobs. The planners point out that this choice is secured only at the cost of wasting a great deal of both time and money in transport—and in waiting for it. But some people at any rate *like* some of this 'waste', though they would of course prefer to have it with less waiting on inclement days. They like getting right away from home in the day time, and getting back at night; they like the complete divorce between work and home, with completely different sets of friends and acquaintances: they like the midday restaurant meal and the sense of working in the great city and of belonging to it as well as to a suburban home. This applies mainly to the great army of 'blackcoats': much less to their wives. For the wives have not, to the same extent, the freedom of bus or underground, and, unless they too go out to work, have only one set of friends and acquaintances. Even so, the wives like the occasional shopping jaunt to the centre; the evening out, or afternoon show in town, the occasional restaurant meal, and the sense that the great city is at hand, even if they do not quite belong to it. Planners will forget at their peril that these things are liked, and that even a prodigious expenditure of time and money on transport is not all to be put down on the debit side of the account.

As against this, planners are apt to suppose that it ought

to be the next thing to heaven to live in Welwyn Garden City. Perhaps it ought; but not everyone is made in that way. Welwyn has many advantages, which have often been recited; but it is not consistent with its size to offer the same range of attractions, or of possible companionships, as can be offered by a bigger place. One of the merits most often claimed for it is that most of its inhabitants work as well as live within it: the 'commuters' are relatively few. But this is to say precisely that it does not offer to its inhabitants the same 'double life' as is open to many working Londoners, especially of the 'blackcoat' status. The circles of workmates and private friends and neighbours at any rate overlap, if they do not coincide. All the better, say the planners; for this unity will produce better integrated men and citizens. Quite! But what if the men and citizens wish to be disintegrated? What if the very disintegration of the life of London is for many of them a highly valued means of escape? Unhealthy! say the planners; and I agree. But what is a democrat to do if a considerable number of people want to live unhealthy, escapist lives?

My own answer to that very difficult question is, not merely "Try to persuade them to feel differently", but also "Plan to offer them to some extent what you think they ought to want." This answer is subject, however, to two important qualifications—or even to three. In the first place, it is one thing to set out to give people what you think most of them will like when they get used to it, and quite another to give them what you expect most of them to go on disliking, or at least not liking in a positive sense. The planners mostly believe that a large proportion of the people they wish to move out of London will come to like the new surroundings much better than the old, provided of course that the new or expanded towns and settlements to which they are to move are well planned from the standpoint of amenities. To this I should add that a considerably larger income is needed to live happily in a Garden City than in a slum, or even in an ordinary working-class quarter in an existing built-up area. This is so, not only or even mainly because there are more appearances to keep up, and more things not to spoil: it is also because the new surroundings suggest and involve new wants, and to change one's wants generally means spending more on them.

Secondly, it is one thing to uproot people from an insecurity to which they have got used, and to plunge them into an insecurity that is new to them, and quite another to lift them out of the old insecurity into a new environment in which their security, and their consciousness of security, are increased. The people who live under conditions of accustomed insecurity have devised all sorts of mitigations of it—not least, a habit of mutual help and give and take which is very strong in many old working-class quarters. To deprive them of this secondary security of neighbourliness is to take away one of the best things in their lives, and is quite unjustifiable unless they are given a *much* higher degree of economic security in their new environment—above all during the critical years while the new or enlarged settlement is growing into a community such as, however well it is planned, it cannot possibly be at first.

Thirdly, the people who are moved out must on no account be left with the sense of being 'stuck'. If they do not like the new settlement to which they have been induced to migrate (and, whatever its character, some of them will not like it) they must have it made easy for them to move somewhere else, and not too difficult to move back into or nearer to the great city, if that is what they really want. It is not sinful to wish to live in a big city, or even in one of its nearer suburbs. It is not the case—and nobody really believes it to be the case—that *no one* ought to live in Bermondsey, or in Hampstead, or in Hackney. Fewer people ought to live in these places, perhaps; but not no one. Our aim must be to provide better inducements in order to get more people to wish to live elsewhere, and to leave in, *or attract to*, the inner areas those who really like them best, even when other good alternatives are made effectively open to them.

With these reservations in mind we can proceed with a tolerably clear conscience to consider the problem of Greater London from a standpoint which makes dispersal one of the things to be aimed at. Here, however, a really large issue at once confronts us. Is any area into which it is proposed by dispersal to transfer population out of London to become by that very act a part of the Greater London for which we are setting out to devise a form of government and an appropriate planning machinery? To answer 'Yes' to this

question would be monstrous: for in the first place it would, if dispersal were really and effectively pursued, lead to the inclusion within Greater London of a grossly excessive area, and in the second place it might easily have the effect of spoiling the dispersal policy by encouraging the establishment of new settlements quite near London, when they might be established to much better purpose farther away. The aim of the policy of dispersal out of congested areas is not that of spreading their populations thinner over a larger area, in such a way that they all continue to be citizens of the areas as enlarged: it is that of breaking up the very large concentrations and of transferring people to smaller centres, new or old, in such a way that they become citizens of their new and cease to be citizens of their old localities. Or rather, this is a part of the aim; for I do not mean to suggest that every dispersal centre should lose its contact with the place from which its people have come. I am only denying that the removal of a proportion of the inhabitants of  $x$  to  $y$  constitutes any reason for including  $y$  within the same region as  $x$  for purposes either of local or regional administration or of town and country planning.

Glance for a moment at the area covered by Sir Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan. It extends a very long way—right to the borders of Cambridgeshire in the north, almost to High Wycombe in the west, and to the confines of Sussex in the south, as well as far eastwards into Kent and Essex. I am referring, of course, to Professor Abercrombie's 'outer ring', which lies beyond both his 'suburban area' and his 'green belt'. Extensive as this area is, he has had to go well outside it for some of his proposed New Towns that are meant to act as dispersal centres for industry and population out of Inner London: so that it is clearly not self-contained from the standpoint of a planned policy of metropolitan decentralization. It is too small to be self-contained in this sense; but it is at the same time evidently much too large and too remote from London, in the main concerns of many of its parts, to be a suitable area for a London 'conurbation' marked off by the possession of its own self-contained system of regional government from the rest of the country. For some purposes it may be necessary to plan over an area as large as, or larger than, that which is

included within Professor Abercrombie's 'outer ring'; but assuredly no such area is required for most purposes of regional planning for Greater London—much less for the administration of Greater London's local government services.

If we reject, for these purposes, the 'Abercrombie' area (which does not at all imply rejecting the Abercrombie Plan), what alternative area can be regarded as suitable either for the administration of such London services as need unified control over a wide area, or for planning, apart from the special problems of dispersal beyond the regional frontiers? We begin, inevitably, with the area at present within the jurisdiction of the London County Council, throwing in as a matter of course the small (and residually almost uninhabited) district still presided over by the absurd unreformed Corporation of the City, with its fantastic Wards and its obsolete paraphernalia and flummery.<sup>1</sup> One of these Wards, I observe, has just been holding its first election since 1887, more than half-a-century ago; but who cares whether the Wards of the City hold elections or not? Whether or no, there is no democracy about them.

The present area of the London County Council is identical with that which was given to the Metropolitan Board of Works on its establishment in 1855, with the sole function of co-ordinating the main drainage system of the Metropolis. It covered then, getting on for a century ago, not only the built-up area of London, but also a great deal of open ground—especially south of the river, where Wandsworth in the west and Lewisham and Woolwich in the east stretched far into open country. As against this, the London of 1855 was pinched into a narrow space at its eastern end north of the Thames, where it came up against the Hams. The river Lea was here taken as the boundary for the full length of Poplar and of Hackney; and then the line ran westwards, leaving Tottenham, Hornsey and Highgate outside, but including a fair amount of open land to the north of Islington and St. Pancras. Thence the line circled round Hampstead, which was included, but left Kilburn outside. It pushed out westwards to include a good deal of land to the north of

<sup>1</sup> The Town and Country Planning Bill of 1947 provides for throwing the City, for general planning purposes, in with the London area, but not for any more extensive change.

Kensington and Shepherd's Bush, and then came southward to meet the river, between Hammersmith and Chiswick, including the former and excluding the latter. Opposite the frontier across the river lay the area north of Barnes—an empty 'island' between two reaches of the Thames. This was left out; and 'London' started again just west of Putney, and then spread out farther west to take in Roehampton and Putney Heath, before turning eastwards on its long and irregular course through the area south of Woolwich.

This London of 1855, which is still the London of the L.C.C., had some rhyme or reason behind it when it was defined, but has plainly none now. Even if we set aside the fact that London's built-up area has far outgrown these narrow frontiers, there is the special point that along much of their length a double process has been at work. Places that were inside the frontiers of 1855 have been growing outwards; but it is no less true that places that were outside have been growing in. Highgate, Kilburn, Kensal Green, Norwood, and Sydenham are obvious examples.

This highly unsuitable area which at present forms the Administrative County of London is broken up into 28 smaller areas—those of the Metropolitan Boroughs—constituted in 1899, mainly on the basis of a medley of earlier local bodies with widely varying powers. In relation to the conditions of to-day, some of these lesser areas are quite as irrational and unsuitable as the area of L.C.C. London as a whole. For example, to the south of the Thames, a part of Deptford is in municipal Greenwich; Southwark is divided between municipal Southwark and Bermondsey; Clapham, which has no municipal existence, is divided between Wandsworth and Battersea; Streatham, also unrecognized municipally, is partly in Wandsworth and partly in Lambeth. Similarly, north of the river, Hammersmith and Kensington are administrative absurdities, their northern and southern sections being almost unrelated. St. Pancras and Islington similarly lack all real unity, and their common boundary cuts right through what are essentially single communities. Bloomsbury is partly in Holborn, partly in Marylebone, and partly in St. Pancras, and Clerkenwell partly in Holborn and partly in Finsbury. The frontier between Westminster and Marylebone runs along the centre of Oxford Street. Anyone who knows his London, in terms

of its administrative structure, can easily multiply examples. Indeed, the Abercrombie Plan for the County of London makes the point plain—so often do the real 'communities' which its author attempts to uncover cut right across the existing administrative frontiers, both between the Metropolitan Boroughs and, all round the edges, between London County and the areas outside it.

I am setting out in this chapter to suggest for Greater London what I have suggested in previous chapters for other parts of the country—both a regional frontier delimited with tolerable correspondence to the needs of planning and of large-scale administration, and an inner articulation based as far as possible on real and living communities—including some which have still life in them, even though they have been for many years past officially dead. It seems best to begin with the broad delimitation of the regional frontier. The frontispiece map gives my idea of what, from this point of view, the size of Greater London ought to be—Greater London, that is, as a conurbation both with a Regional Planning Authority of its own, linked by means of a Joint Authority with its neighbours, and with a Regional Council, possessed of large administrative powers and succeeding in many matters to the authority of the London County Council, of which it would take over the essential machinery and equipment.

In drawing this sketch-map of the new Greater London I have nowhere cut across existing administrative frontiers—not because I think they should in all cases necessarily be kept, but because I lack the requisite detailed knowledge and regard the matter as one of detail, which can be easily adjusted if the general principles are accepted as sound. The principle I have followed is that of advancing London's frontiers everywhere beyond the edge of the continuous built-up area, and in some places a good way farther, to take in 'green belt' areas, but not to advance the frontiers so far as to bring in what are still, even if precariously, independent urban communities, or to cut away large tracts of agricultural land from the areas farther out with which they naturally belong. For reasons given already, I have made no attempt to include any particular number, or indeed, purposely, any of Professor Abercrombie's new 'dispersal' towns. My plan was drawn up, and circulated privately, even before Professor Aber-

crombie had begun work on his report; and I have seen no reason to modify it in any essential respect. I say that, not as an expression of dissent from Professor Abercrombie, but as an indication that his areas have been delimited with different purposes in view.

Greater London, as I wish to define it, stops short just beyond Watford and Barnet to the north-west, but runs out rather farther to the north-east to take in the Epping Forest area, which has old and close associations with London. On the east, it follows recent building growth by running out a considerable way along the Essex flats, to take in Grays and Thurrock; and, to the south of the river, it goes as far as Gravesend, but not farther, because otherwise it would be getting too near to the orbit of the Medway Towns. Beyond Gravesend, it goes a fair way to the south to take in the big pre-war housing developments round the Crays and Orpington; and perhaps I have been too restrictive in not taking it farther south in the area between this and Caterham, in Surrey. From Caterham I have taken the line practically due west to include the large recently developed suburban area round Coulsdon and Epsom and, farther west, along the Kingston by-pass. Here again, and between this area and Staines, I have possibly been unduly restrictive; but I am surer where my frontier turns north beyond Staines and passes up to the west of Uxbridge until it completes its course by encircling Watford.

The area which I have thus delimited had in 1938 a population of approximately 9,500,000 of whom rather more than four millions were in the inner area comprising London County and the City, well over another two millions in administrative areas lying wholly or partly inside what Professor Abercrombie calls the 'inner urban' area, more than another two millions inside the rest of Professor Abercrombie's main 'suburban' area, and the remainder outside these areas, in or beyond Professor Abercrombie's 'green belt'. Let us now look round the edges of this greatest of conurbations, in order to see what will be its principal neighbours if we decide to endow it with a regional autonomy similar to that which has been suggested for Greater Birmingham or for Greater Manchester, but on a larger scale.

On the north-west the suggested frontier runs north of Watford, now an important industrial centre closely connected

with London by tube as well as by main-line railway and other suburban services. Beyond the frontier lie, more or less in a line from west to east, the Hertfordshire towns of Tring, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, St. Albans, Hatfield (with Welwyn just to the north of it), Hertford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth (with Bishop's Stortford just to the north). All these I leave outside Greater London as I define it; but at the east end of Hertfordshire I include Hoddesdon, with Broxbourne, and Cheshunt, with its close connections with the rest of the market-gardening area in Middlesex and Essex. I take in the whole of Middlesex, and of course Barnet, which sticks out into it from Hertfordshire; but of Hertfordshire I take as little as I can, and emphatically I do not include Hemel Hempstead, where a 'new town' is being planned, or St. Albans, or Welwyn, or Hertford itself. It would be indeed a sad fate for the inhabitants of Welwyn Garden City to find themselves back in London, from which many of them have sought successfully to escape.

Beyond Hertfordshire and Middlesex towards the east lies Essex, into which London has been poking out at a great pace between the wars. Here it is simply a question of where to stop, in order to avoid taking in too many agricultural villages which have no real connection with London except as a market. There is not, as in Hertfordshire, any ring of existing towns lying only a little way beyond what can properly be called London, and already in danger of being sucked into the Metropolis. I have thought it best, for reasons given already, to take in the entire area of Epping Forest; and I have made the line continue from the level of Hoddesdon in a south-easterly direction to take in Ongar. Thence it can be made to run either almost due south to include Brentwood, or still to the south-east, to take in Billericay as well—and I am not sure which is preferable. If Billericay is left out, the line goes on nearly due south to include Grays and Thurrock and Tilbury (now municipally united), reaching the Thames just east of Tilbury. This line of delimitation leaves a fair stretch of open country between Greater London and Chelmsford, which is the only place of any size in Essex near the proposed frontier. It leaves Thames Haven, Canvey Island, and Benfleet, down the river, well outside the Greater London limits.

A straight crossing of the river from Tilbury brings us to

Gravesend, in Kent; and hereabouts I have set the eastern boundary of Greater London south of the Thames. Here the line has clearly to be drawn somewhere through the mainly rural belt which still divides the built-up area from the Medway Towns to the east and from the Wrotham-Sevenoaks district to the south-east. Where precisely the line should be drawn through this rural belt, though which development was spreading fast until the war interrupted the speculative builders, is a secondary question; and I see no purpose in attempting to be precise. Inside the Greater London boundary must lie Gravesend and its immediate neighbours, Northfleet and Swanscombe; Erith, Crayford and Dartford; Bexley, Sidcup and Chislehurst (much increase of population here in the 1930's), and deeper, into Kent, the Crays and Orpington; and beyond this group, Bromley, Beckenham and Penge, with Anerley, at the western tip of the county on the Surrey border.

Into Surrey Greater London sticks down a long way to the south. It has engulfed Croydon, formerly an independent town of some size, and has gone a long way farther, through Carshalton, Coulsdon and Purley. The moot point is whether Caterham is best included or left outside; tentatively I have put it inside Greater London, leaving Reigate and Redhill, and likewise Leatherhead and Dorking farther west, outside. The suggested line cuts across, then, either north or south of Caterham, to take in Banstead and Epsom. Hence it runs south of Esher and the Dittons, and then of Walton-on-Thames, Weybridge and Chertsey, and reaches the Berkshire border just short of Sunningdale, taking in Virginia Water and Egham. Here the river is crossed, and the line runs up the Middlesex boundary, including Staines, Harmondsworth, Yiewsley, Uxbridge and Harefield, and so on to encircle Rickmansworth and Watford in Hertfordshire, and to complete the circuit.

This is a modest Greater London, in comparison with some other delimitations. It is based, of course, on the assumption that, from now on, London, as a continuous built-up area or as a city needing unified administration, is not to be allowed to grow. On no other assumption does so narrow a conception make sense. If the urban sprawl of the period between the wars is to be resumed, we must take the frontiers of Greater London as far as Royston on the north, Southend and Margate

Table 15

GREATER LONDON: 1938 Populations of Administrative Areas Proposed for Inclusion in Conurbation

County	County Boroughs		Other Boroughs		(Populations in thousands)		Urban Districts		Rural Districts		TOTAL Pop.	
	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.	No.	Pop.		
LONDON	1 (City)	9.2	28	4,053.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	29	4,062.9
HERTFORDSHIRE	—	—	1	65.5	7	117.8	2	28.2	10	211.5	10	211.5
MIDDLESEX	—	—	15	1,522.6	11	534.6	—	—	26	2,057.2	26	2,057.2
ESSEX	2	384.4	8	746.0	7	242.7	2	27.6	19	1,400.7	19	1,400.7
KENT	—	—	6	322.3	6	184.1	1	32.8	13	539.2	13	539.2
SURREY	1	243.4	10	490.6	9	350.4	—	—	20	1,084.4	20	1,084.4
TOTALS	4 <sup>1</sup>	637.0 <sup>1</sup>	68 <sup>2</sup>	7,200.7	40	1,429.6	5	88.6	117	9,355.9	117	9,355.9

<sup>1</sup> Including City of London.<sup>2</sup> Including Metropolitan Boroughs.

Table 16

## GREATER LONDON: 1938. Areas by Population, Size and Status

	<i>C.B.s</i>	<i>N.C.B.s</i>	<i>Met. B.s</i>	<i>U.D.s</i>	<i>R.D.s</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Over 300,000	—	—	1	—	—	1
" 250,000	1	—	2	—	—	3
" 200,000	1	—	4	—	—	5
" 150,000	—	3	3	1	—	7
" 100,000	1	8	7	—	—	16
" 90,000	—	2	6	1	—	9
" 80,000	—	—	1	—	—	1
" 70,000	—	4	—	1	—	5
" 60,000	—	6	—	3	—	9
" 50,000	—	7	3	2	—	12
" 40,000	—	2	—	5	—	7
" 30,000	—	8	1	4	1	14
" 20,000	—	—	—	10	—	10
" 10,000	—	—	—	9	3	12
Under 10,000	1 <sup>1</sup>	—	—	4	1	6
TOTALS	4	40	28	40	5	117

<sup>1</sup> City of London

on the east, High Wycombe on the west, and on the south right to Brighton and the entire row of coast towns in Sussex. If, on the other hand, we mean dispersal seriously, and can make our new towns—and our old towns which people have been fain to desert—pleasant enough for people to wish to live in them, without at the same time making them into parts of London, the Greater London which I have defined in the preceding paragraphs ought to be plenty big enough for all ordinary purposes, subject only to so much co-ordinated planning with its neighbours as we can reasonably hope to get done through a Joint Planning Authority, or through more than one, not armed with mandatory powers of its own.

What of the internal government of this vastly populous area—for vastly populous it will remain even if the policy of dispersal achieves, in the long run, all that is hoped of it? I assume that in many matters it will be governed by a directly elected Regional Authority—a sort of Greater London Parliament which will become what the L.C.C. has never been allowed to be. But of course I assume also that within its area a number of lesser authorities will enjoy a large measure of autonomy, analogous to that which is now enjoyed by the Metropolitan Borough Councils within the L.C.C. area, but in some respects greater, because there will be more need for devolution within the much larger unit.

It is easier to consider areas before powers. Here we have a conurbation within which are included at present (1) the City of London; (2) the 28 Metropolitan Boroughs inside London County; (3) the County Boroughs of West Ham, East Ham, and Croydon; (4) no fewer than 40 non-county Boroughs—one in Hertfordshire, 15 in Middlesex, 8 in Essex, 6 in Kent, and 10 in Surrey; (5) 40 Urban Districts—9 in Hertfordshire, 11 in Middlesex, 7 in Essex, 6 in Kent, and 9 in Surrey; and (6) the whole or a part of 5 Rural Districts—2 in Hertfordshire, 2 in Essex, and 1 in Kent.

Of this medley of areas, including those in Inner London, one—the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth—had in 1938 a population of over 300,000. Three—the County Borough of West Ham, as well as two Metropolitan Boroughs, Islington and Lambeth—exceeded a quarter of a million; and five more—the County Borough of Croydon, and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Camberwell, Hackney, Lewisham and Stepney—

exceeded 200,000. Twenty-three other areas, including one Urban District—Harrow—exceeded 100,000, and nine more were above the 90,000 mark. Another 27 had populations between 90,000 and 50,000, and 20 more between 50,000 and 30,000. Only 24 had fewer than 30,000, and of these only five were under 10,000. In all, including 5 Rural Districts, we have a total of 117 Local Authorities, excluding the six County Councils, within the area which I have delimited as Greater London.

This area clearly needs breaking up, not simply between a large number of small Local Authorities—small enough to stand for the little local ‘communities’ of which the bigger communities are made up—but between Authorities covering sufficient areas and populations to administer quite large-scale services—for example, most forms of school education, and most of the major health services. For this purpose I take a hint from the abortive Royal Commission on London Government which reported between the wars. Some of its members favoured the breaking-up of London into a number of independent County Boroughs, each entirely autonomous within its own district. I am strongly against any such destruction of London’s essential unity; but I do regard Greater London, however defined, as too big to be administered centrally for more than a minimum of common services—including of course the fundamental common service of Regional Planning. Accordingly, I want to see, side by side with the directly elected Greater London Regional Authority, a small number of directly elected major authorities, each covering a part of the whole area, and as far as possible a part possessing some sort of unity and character of its own.

If such major authorities are desirable, how many of them ought there to be? Opinions on such a matter are bound to differ; but it seems to me that nine District Authorities would best cover the ground. I begin with one for Central London north of the Thames, to take in both the City with part of the business area round it—the ‘City’ in another sense—and the West End, including the Government offices and the residential parts of Westminster, Chelsea and South (but not North) Kensington. This entire district has a resident population of well under half a million; but it has quite special problems and a special character of its own.

I then proceed to mark off an inner area south of the Thames, to which I give, for reasons of historical association, the old name of Southwark. To this I assign the Metropolitan Boroughs of Southwark, Deptford, Bermondsey, and Battersea, most of Lambeth and Camberwell, and the larger part of Wandsworth, lopping off the extreme south and the extreme west of the combined area of these Boroughs. This is in effect old South London, with a 1938 population of about a million and a quarter.

So far, the Districts which I have marked out fall entirely within the frontiers of London County and of the City of London. All the rest of my proposed Districts are either partly or wholly outside this central area. For my third District I take the Metropolitan Boroughs of Hammersmith, Fulham and Paddington, with North Kensington, and link them up with the areas of Outer London along the Uxbridge Road and to the south of it, taking in the places north of the river as far as Staines. This large District includes Acton, Brentford, Ealing, Southall, Heston, and a number of growing far western suburbs. It had in all in 1938 a population of well over a million.

My fourth District, that of North-West London, lies to the north of the area just defined. Of the Metropolitan Boroughs, it includes Hampstead and the northern part of Marylebone (St. John's Wood). Outside the L.C.C. area it takes in Finchley, Hendon, Harrow, Wembley, Willesden, Barnet, and a number of other places to its limit at Watford. It had in 1938 a population of about 1,000,000, and was being rapidly developed.

To the east of this District lies what I have called North London—an area embracing no fewer than six Metropolitan Boroughs—St. Pancras (though a part of this would go better with the North-West), Islington, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Hackney, and Stoke Newington, to which are added the Outer London areas of Southgate, Hornsey, Wood Green, Enfield, Tottenham and Edmonton. This is the most populous of all my proposed Districts. It has nearly a million and a half inhabitants. It could possibly be better split into two Districts, one including St. Pancras, Islington, Hornsey, Southgate and Wood Green, and the other Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Hackney, Stoke Newington, Tottenham,

Edmonton and Enfield—each with about three-quarters of a million people.

To the south and east of the area just described lie the East End Metropolitan Boroughs of Stepney and Poplar, and beyond them Leyton, West and East Ham and Barking, with Ilford to the north of Barking, and the combined Borough of Wanstead and Woodford poking down between Leyton and Ilford. This is the District I have denominated 'East End', except that I have suggested separating Wanstead from Woodford, so as to include the former but not the latter. In this District there were in 1938 rather more than a million inhabitants: but it has of course suffered very seriously from air-raids and its population has been greatly reduced.

Next comes the area of Outer London that spreads fanwise into the Essex countryside to the north and east of what I have called the 'East End'. This area I call North-East. It lies entirely outside London County, and includes the 'Forest' area to the north, with Walthamstow, Woodford, Chingford, Chigwell, Waltham Holy Cross, Epping and Ongar; and to these I have added the Cheshunt and Hoddesdon Urban Districts across the Hertfordshire border. Farther to the east lie Brentwood and Billericay, and, bordering on the Thames estuary, Dagenham (with Romford to the north of it), Hornchurch and Thurrock, which includes Grays and Tilbury. This District had in 1938 fewer than three-quarters of a million people; but it had been growing at an extraordinary rate during the 'thirties.

At this point we cross the river, by Tilbury, and come into what I call the South-Eastern District. This brings us back to London County, which sticks out here a good way to the east in the area assigned to the Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich. With Woolwich I take two other Metropolitan Boroughs—Lewisham and Greenwich—and perhaps a bit of Deptford, but the greater part of Deptford, if not the whole, falls best into the next District. With this sector of London County go the Kent outliers—Erith, Crayford and Dartford, along the river eastwards from Woolwich, and the Gravesend Group, including Swanscombe and Northfleet, farther east; Bexley, Chislehurst, and Sidcup, Bromley, Beckenham, and Penge, strung round the southern and eastern frontiers of the County area; and Orpington and part of the Dartford Rural District

Table 17

## GREATER LONDON: PROPOSED DISTRICT AUTHORITIES

<i>District</i>	<i>Metropolitan Boroughs Included</i>	<i>Other Boroughs Included</i>	<i>Urban Districts Included</i>	<i>Approximate 1938 Population (thousands)</i>
1. CENTRAL LONDON	City of London Westminster Holborn Finsbury Chelsea Kensington (South) Marylebone (South)			500
2. SOUTHWARK	Southwark Deptford Bermondsey Lambeth (except Norwood) Battersea Camberwell (except Dulwich) Wandsworth (East and Central)			1,250
3. WEST LONDON	Hammersmith Fulham Paddington Kensington (North)	Brentford and Chiswick Acton Ealing Southall Heston and Isleworth	Uxbridge Ruislip and Northwood Yiewsley and West Drayton Hayes and Harlington Feltham Sunbury-on-Thames Staines	1,050

# GREATER LONDON: PROPOSED DISTRICT AUTHORITIES—Continued.

<i>District</i>	<i>Metropolitan Boroughs Included</i>	<i>Other Boroughs Included</i>	<i>Urban Districts Included</i>	<i>Approximate 1938 Population (thousands)</i>
4. NORTH-WEST LONDON	Hampstead Marylebone (North)	Finchley Hendon Wembley Willesden Watford	Harrow Friern Barnet Barnet East Barnet Potters Bar Rickmansworth Chorley Wood Elstree (R.D.) Watford (R.D. part)	1,100
5. NORTH LONDON	(a) St. Pancras Islington  (b) Shoreditch Bethnal Green Hackney Stoke Newington	Hornsey Southgate Wood Green  Tottenham Edmonton	Enfield	1,450  700  750
6. EAST END	Stepney Poplar	West Ham East Ham Barking Leyton Ilford Wanstead (but not Woodford)		1,050

Waltham Holy Cross

Epping

Epping (R.D.)

Ongar (R.D.)

Brentwood

Hornchurch

Billericay

Thurrock

Hoddesdon

Cheshunt

## 8. SOUTH-EAST LONDON

Greenwich

Lewisham

Woolwich

Beckenham

Bromley

Bexley

Erith

Dartford

Gravesend

Penge 1,000

Chislehurst and Sidcup

Orpington

Crayford

Swanscombe

Northfleet

Dartford (R.D. part)

## 9. SOUTH LONDON

Lambeth (Norwood)

Camberwell (Dulwich)

Wandsworth (West)

Croydon

Mitcham

Beddington and

Wallington

Sutton and Cheam

Epsom and Ewell

Wimbledon

Malden and Coombe

Surbiton

Kingston-on-Thames

Richmond

Barnes

Coulston and Purley 1,150

Caterham and Warlingham

Carshalton

Banstead

Merton and Morden

Esher

Walton and Weybridge

Chertsey

Egham

forming an outer circle between the Surrey border and Gravesend. This District had in 1938 a total population of about a million.

Finally, we come to the outer ring of South and South-West London, lying beyond the District which I have called Southwark. This District includes outlying parts of three Metropolitan Boroughs—the Dulwich area of Camberwell, the Norwood area which lies partly in Camberwell and partly in Lambeth, the Streatham area lying mainly in Wandsworth but lapping over into Lambeth, and the Putney-Roehampton area at the extreme west end of Wandsworth. The main part of it, however, lies outside the County of London, and is in fact 'London in Surrey'. It starts with Croydon in the east, with Coulsdon and Purley and Caterham and Warlingham to the south of it, and Mitcham, Beddington and Wallington, and Carshalton, Sutton and Cheam, Epsom and Ewell, and Banstead to the west. Beyond these it takes in Wimbledon on the County of London border, and therewith Merton and Morden, Malden and Coombe, and Surbiton. To the north of this group it includes Richmond, Barnes and Kingston-on-Thames. Westward again it extends through Esher, at the far end of the Kingston by-pass, and along the river by Walton and Weybridge, Chertsey and Egham to the border of Berkshire. All this large area had in 1938 roughly 1,150,000 inhabitants.

Here are nine, or possibly ten, major Districts into which I suggest that Greater London should be divided for general administration of those services which require large-scale operation but need not be administered over the whole Greater London area, provided there is some measure of general planning for the whole, and some effective co-ordination of policy. An area including a population of a million or so is surely not too small for most of the services which fall within the field of Local Government and call for large-scale management; and if, for any particular service, such areas are too small, the answer is to hand the work over to the Greater London Regional Authority itself.

I should perhaps at this point remind the reader that I am not now discussing the services known as 'Public Utilities'—water, gas, electricity, or transport. They are dealt with separately in another chapter. The services I have here in

mind are health, including the wide range of sanitary services, education, parks, playing-fields and open spaces, amenities in general—and then there is housing.

Housing, however, raises quite a number of special problems to which I should prefer to come back later, as they arise not only in London, but also elsewhere. Planning is, or should be, intimately connected in one of its aspects with housing, and in another with the whole problem of the location of industry and the distribution of population in relation to it. Now, this latter sort of planning, which involves the 'zoning' of London for residential as well as for industrial purposes, is plainly a matter that must be under the direct control of the Greater London Regional Authority. The master-plans must be made for and by the whole Region: that must be so, however much of the execution may be left in the hands of the nine or ten District Authorities.

If this conception of a Greater London administered largely through a few major District Authorities is accepted, it remains to consider what lesser authorities should exist within the area of each District. That there should be such lesser authorities goes without saying, unless the arguments adduced earlier in favour of small-scale Local Government are entirely wrong. Personally, I should like to see these smaller authorities coinciding as far as possible with Professor Abercrombie's 'communities', or with such new communities as may be developed in the course of re-planning and re-building London. But I recognize the advantage of minimizing upsets; and in many cases it may be best to accept the existing administrative boundaries unless they are very badly out of harmony with communal realities. Some of them undoubtedly are so; and some of the existing areas need breaking up into smaller units—especially within the County area, where Boroughs have filled up greatly since their areas were originally defined and, in Outer London, where separate places have joined together less from any real sense of community than in order to achieve an administrative status which might have been denied to them had they remained apart. I do not propose to enter at all into the details of the readjustments that would be called for if the policy of following 'community' groupings were adopted. I need only say that, with the creation of the District Authorities, the main argument in favour of size

would be met, and there would be no valid reason against creating small units wherever the local inhabitants might feel a desire for them. Numerousness would be no objection: the reason for the existence of these units would be to provide means of expression for essentially local sentiment. The 'Napoleon of Notting Hill' would no longer need to make war in order to assert the existence of his local community; he and others fired by the same spirit of local patriotism would be able to find ample expression for it in the development of local services and amenities that are better run on a small scale by people who are closely concerned with the actual enjoyment of them than under the hand of a bureaucracy whose members, however well-intentioned, can never regard them as in any real sense their own.

Greater London, however, has need to be linked to its neighbours as well as to be broken up into lesser groups for the servicing of its people's needs. It is too plain to call for argument that the Greater London Region, as I have defined it in this chapter, cannot be planned without relation to its neighbours, and also that they for their part can make their plans only in the light of what London is expected to do. I have indeed deliberately drawn Greater London's frontiers narrowly on the assumption that the Greater London Regional Authority and its neighbours will prepare concerted master-plans through some sort of Joint Authority. I have not proposed that this Joint Authority be given mandatory powers to override the constituent Regions; but emphatically I do propose that this overriding power shall be vested in the authority that makes the *national* plan—that is, finally, in the Government itself. The planning of London and its neighbours, as far as the general principles are concerned, is a national and not merely a regional question; and accordingly the Government must have the last word.

Subject to this *national* right to lay down a master-plan and to ensure its observance, the planning of the Home Counties Super-Region should be a matter for a Joint Authority, representing the Greater London Regional Authority and its neighbours, and working on the basis of plans placed before it for co-ordination by the constituent Authorities.

According to the proposals put forward in Chapter VII, Greater London will have five other Regions as immediate

neighbours. The Kent-Surrey area, assigned to the South-Eastern Region, lies beyond the South-East and South London Districts. The Berkshire area of the Southern Region faces the South London District across the river by Windsor and Sunninghill. The Buckinghamshire part of the East Midland Region comes close to Staines, Uxbridge, and Rickmansworth, with Slough, Beaconsfield and Chesham only a little distance outside the Greater London Region. Hertfordshire, assigned to the Eastern Region, is mulcted of its southernmost districts, and spreads a line of towns just beyond the Greater London Region as I have defined it—Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, St. Albans, Hatfield and Welwyn, Hertford and Ware. These areas lie round the North-Western and Western Districts of Greater London. Farther east the East Anglian Region includes all Essex outside the circle of Greater London, of which it touches the Northern and North-Eastern Districts.

We have thus to contemplate a Joint Planning Authority for the Home Counties made up of six Authorities, and probably working largely through sub-committees representing the surrounding Regions and the Greater London Districts primarily concerned. Obviously, these Regions have not all an equal interest in Greater London's affairs, or even in the planning of the Home Counties as a whole. But on a Joint Authority not possessed of mandatory powers voting is not a very important matter; and I do not propose to enter into the question of the proportions in which the various bodies should be represented on the Joint Authority. The matters which evidently concern them all most closely are three—the preservation, or creation, of a Green Belt round the built-up area of Greater London, the location of New Towns, or of expanded existing towns, under the main dispersal scheme, and the planning of the main lines of roads and road services into and out of London, to the extent to which these are matters falling under local or regional control.

In the matter of the Green Belt I have nothing here to add to what has been said already by Professor Abercrombie and by others. The Green Belt of Professor Abercrombie's Greater London Plan lies partly inside and partly outside Greater London as I have defined it. Only into Essex and for a tiny distance into North Kent does my area run beyond his Green Belt. On the north this latter stops short of Hemel

Hempstead, St. Albans, and Hertford, and then it curves round, taking in the Epping area, but leaving out Brentwood, and reaches the Thames nearly opposite Dartford. On the south side of the river it begins west of Northfleet and goes almost due south to include Sevenoaks. It then turns west, passing Redhill and Reigate to the south, and curls northwards to exclude Woking, to the north of which it goes westwards a little and then makes almost due north to Windsor, which is just outside it. Turning eastward to avoid Slough, it takes in the Chalfonts and then goes north-eastward, leaving High Wycombe and Chesham well outside—and so back to complete the circle to the north of Watford.

Naturally, Professor Abercrombie's proposed satellite New Towns all lie beyond this Green Belt, and, with the single exception of Chipping Ongar, outside Greater London as I have defined it in this book. This means that the planning of New Towns, including their siting, must be a matter either for the Joint Authority which I have suggested, or for the national authority, or rather, in practice, for both. The need to treat it as a matter for national determination was fully recognized in the Government's New Towns Act of 1946, which even rejected the Reith Committee's proposal that some of the New Towns should be planned and constructed under local, or joint local, auspices. Whatever may be thought on this point about the rest of the country, I feel sure that, in its bearing on the dispersal of Greater London, this decision was right. The problem involves so many Regions, and so greatly affects the whole country, as to call for national determination.

Roads, the other matter of most evident common concern to London and to its neighbours, have recently been the subject of a special Technical Report arising out of the Abercrombie Plan. I do not propose to enter into the question here, except to say that of course the right planning of the road system is essential to the successful working of the dispersal policy, as well as to the proper connection between London and the rest of the country. The study of road problems will obviously be one of the most important functions of the Home Counties Joint Planning Authority. What more I need to say about it can best be said when I come to discuss Transport in the chapter dealing with Public Utilities and their problems.

## GREATER LONDON

Here, then, is a plan for the planning and government of Greater London, fitting in, I hope, reasonably well with what I have advocated for other parts of the country, but also recognizing the essential differences which arise out of the existence of a complex of interconnected communities making a total community of a quite different order of magnitude from any other in Great Britain. I shall, of course, be told that what I am proposing is too complicated: everyone who proposes any workable plan of local government reform is certain to be told that. What I claim for my scheme is, first, that it is immensely less complicated than what exists to-day, and secondly that it does make a real attempt to reconcile the two aims of Local Government—the provision of administrative units of adequate size for the control of services which need to be managed on a large scale (but not on *too* large a scale), and the preservation or re-creation of units small enough to give the ordinary citizen, if he cares, a sense of Local Government as his own *local* affair and as relating to a local *community* to which, as well as to the larger community in which it is set, he really belongs. Therewith I hope I have provided a framework adequate for the larger purposes of regional and supra-regional planning, and have done what machinery can do to give the people a chance of being both competently and democratically dealt with in the local and regional affairs of this vast—too vast—Metropolis in which—let us never forget—so many of them *prefer* to live.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

FIFTY years ago, when Socialism was becoming a recognized political force in Great Britain, one of the main practical issues raised by the Socialists was that of 'municipal enterprise', called sometimes in contempt by the nickname of 'Gas and Water Socialism'. The Fabians especially were advocating strongly that the essential public utility services in the towns should be transferred to municipal ownership and management; and the process of buying out company undertakings as their concessions fell in was proceeding at a fairly rapid pace. In the case of water-supply this was nothing new; for many private water companies had been bought out earlier in the nineteenth century without anyone suspecting that their acquisition by the municipalities had anything at all to do with Socialism. Similarly, some private dock undertakings had been bought out, not without controversy, but without the controversy being connected in anyone's mind with Socialism. The Bristol dock undertaking, for example, was acquired by the Corporation in 1848. Only in the 1890's did 'Municipal Socialism' become a phrase calculated to arouse strong party passions, or did Socialists seriously take up 'Gas and Water Socialism' as a leading factor in their campaign on the local government front.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the Fabians at any rate began before long to realize that the areas of Local Government were for the most part none too well suited to serve for the purpose of delimiting the range of public utility undertakings. The first considerable plan for Regional Government—the Fabian Society's 'New Heptarchy' Plan of 1905—was drawn up mainly, though not exclusively, as a project for the betterment of local administrative areas with a view to the public conduct of utility services. Most, if not all, municipal areas, it began to be realized, were bad for

this purpose, not only because they were apt to be too small for fully efficient service, but also because, in providing for the needs of those consumers who lived close together in considerable towns, they were apt to leave insoluble problems for the rest of the country, which could not be economically supplied if the most populous areas were dealt with on a separate basis.

Partly the difficulty about areas, but even more the turning of the whole question into one of party controversy, presently slowed up the development of municipal enterprise. The new electricity services were shared out not unequally between public and private concerns, the 'socializers' having rather the better of the contest in the bigger towns, but this success being partly offset by the growth of large-scale privately owned power companies for the sale of current both to local distributive concerns and directly to large industrial concerns. In the field of gas supply, honours were divided; but here the passion for public acquisition was damped when it seemed possible that gas would have before long to give way to electricity both as an illuminant and as a source of heat and power. By the time this once popular prediction had been falsified, the political obstacles in the way of public acquisition had become stronger—for as Socialist sentiment spread, so did the opposition to it. In the case of local passenger transport services, the municipalizers were unlucky in reaching the height of their influence just when electric trams were the latest thing, and before the introduction of the motor bus. As a consequence, many tramway undertakings came to be municipally owned, whereas the later motor bus services were developed mainly under private auspices and were much less restricted in the areas which they were able to serve.

Only in the supply of water, which is at once a public utility and an essential public health service, did public enterprise, beginning from a period when there was no political controversy about the matter, clearly establish its predominance. In 1939, of all water undertakings of any substantial size, four-fifths were publicly owned, either by individual Local Authorities or by Joint Boards representing a number of such authorities; and in England and Wales about 27 million people were being supplied with water by major public bodies, and only about 6 millions by water

companies acting under statutory powers. This preponderance of public enterprise had, however, been achieved at the cost of an almost unbelievable fragmentation. There were about 530 separate Local Authorities and 15 Joint Boards supplying water under powers derived from the Public Health Acts: another 260 Local Authorities and 33 Joint Boards were operating under private Acts of Parliament: there were 173 water companies acting under private Acts, and another 50 or so operating without special statutory powers. Over and above all these there were roughly 1,000 private proprietors supplying small areas, and a large number of Parish Councils using their limited powers to operate local water services. This list does not include industrial undertakings—some of them very big consumers—which made their own arrangements for the supply of water: nor, of course, does it include the countless consumers who supplied their own domestic or agricultural needs. Even if we leave out all these latter groups, there were at least 938 local authority water undertakings (excluding those of Parish Councils) and at least 223 company undertakings, excluding both private proprietors and industrial concerns supplying their own needs.

Of course, this multiplication of authorities would not have been possible unless water-supply had been a service open to be undertaken by every sort of authority, large or small, except the County Councils. The idea behind this was that most areas—in effect, all save a few very large centres of population—should be in a position to meet their needs for water from local sources, on the surface or underground. The problem was thought of as mainly one of tapping, and of protecting from pollution, water that was already near at hand; and, provided that adequate supplies were to be had on the spot, there were evident advantages in developing them locally, on grounds both of cheapness and of probable avoidance of waste. As great cities grew in areas where there was not much water to be had near at hand—or at all events not much unpolluted water—it became plain that the common rule could not be applied to such areas, and that they would have to be given special powers to bring in supplementary supplies from afar. Thus arose the great municipal, or joint, public undertakings for drawing water from the Welsh hills, from the Lake District, and from the Pennines, with provisions

attached in each case to the Local Acts that were needed, under which areas lying on the routes of supply had to be given the right to draw supplies from the pipe-lines of the great public undertakings.

Water-supply, the earliest of the great public utility services to be widely undertaken by municipal and other local authorities, has thus awkwardly demonstrated the inadequacy of local government areas for its effective conduct. I do not mean at all that the water undertakings of our great towns are inefficiently carried on. Quite the contrary. They are for the most part run with admirable competence. But in the greatest city—London—this has been achieved only by creating a separate regional water authority—the Metropolitan Water Board—covering the areas of many separate Local Authorities; and in the cases of Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool an adequate supply has been secured only by going not merely outside their immediate environs, but to a long distance, outside any Region in which they can plausibly be said to lie. London, despite its great population, has not been forced so far afield, thanks to its large local resources of underground as well as of surface water—the former a capital asset on which it has been drawing heavily in recent years. But there are enough great cities which have already to go outside their own Regions to find sufficient supplies to make it evident that no purely regional solution of the water problem can be even considered to-day.

Water, it has to be remembered, is a vitally important industrial commodity as well as a domestic requisite of health; and for industrial, as well as for domestic, consumers water is not just water, but a good with many differences both of purity and of specific qualities. It is, moreover, a good of which the consumption has increased, and ought to be increased much further. In 1939, when London's consumption was 44 gallons a head and Glasgow's 60 gallons, the citizens of New York were consuming 140 gallons a head; and if every citizen of London had taken to having a bath a day total consumption would have risen by about 75 per cent. In the industrial use of water, it is of course desirable to avoid waste; and the same can be said of domestic consumption. But the industrialist probably uses roughly the amount of water needed by the processes of production which he employs,

wherever he can get so much: whereas it is highly desirable, for reasons of health, to induce the average private citizen to consume a good deal more water than he does now—provided that the additional supplies can be made available.

It would overburden this chapter if I were to enter fully into the problems of water supply or of any other particular public utility service. In an appendix I reproduce a memorandum which I wrote on the subject of water in 1942 for the Nuffield College Social Reconstruction Survey, of which I was then Director. I have made no additions to it, but have given a few notes to adjust its proposals to the scheme of regional organization propounded in this book. I give it in full, as a sample of the peculiar problems which have to be faced in the planning of any particular service. If I had taken gas, or electricity, or transport, instead of water, as my main example, the problems would have been largely different, but the moral to be drawn would have been mainly the same.

This moral is simply that each public utility service calls for handling in terms of its own special characteristics, which are partly technical—*e.g.* the simple fact that water does not flow naturally uphill—but also partly historical—*e.g.* that a particular district is already served with gas or electricity by a unified system, in which is embodied a considerable capital expenditure that has not yet exhausted its usefulness. In the case of water particularly, it would be highly surprising if Regions defined for purposes of local government co-ordination turned out to be suitable also as Water Regions—especially if Water Regions are to be regarded as serving the dual purpose of water-supply and water-catchment and local drainage. In this case the national element predominates in determining the suitable areas; and it is of importance to bring the responsibility for local drainage and for the supply of water under some sort of unified control in order to avoid a situation in which one authority is trying to get rid of water which a quite separate authority is endeavouring to conserve. To the extent to which districts can manage on purely local supplies the only good reasons for large-scale organization are technical; for it is often out of the question for small-scale authorities to afford good technical management or to undertake capital expenditures which are amply worth

while in the long run. Where supplies have to be drawn from a considerable distance, even regional units devised for the general purposes of planning and administration will not suffice. It is inevitable that certain populous Regions must depend on others for a large fraction of their supplies. Nevertheless, a regional arrangement seems desirable, under national co-ordination, and subject to national control, wherever one Region draws, or proposes to draw, on another. There is no case for a national 'water-grid', under unified national management; and the establishment of such a system might easily lead to serious waste of water through failure to make full use of local sources of supply. What seem to be needed in this case are:

- (a) A National Water Commission, with supervisory and co-ordinating powers, and also with power, to be exercised only in the last instance, to take over any undertaking of a more than regional character that is not being efficiently managed in accordance with *national* requirements:
- (b) Regional Water Boards, actually operating water services over large areas, and empowered to take over existing undertakings. I contemplate that these Regional Boards would actually take over most of the existing water undertakings, both public and private, but would be empowered to leave in separate existence, under their supervision, any undertaking that was giving a satisfactory service, subject to conditions ensuring its full co-operation in the regional supply scheme. This would mean that the Regional Board could, where it thought fit, leave in separate operation small undertakings able to give good service by drawing on purely local supplies, and would be able to provide such undertakings with technical advice and help, and also with capital, or with aid in raising it. Some of the quite small undertakings are able to provide good service from local sources at a very low cost; and there seems to be no good reason for upsetting the existing arrangements where such a situation exists. It might mean also that certain larger undertakings would be left undisturbed, where there appeared to be no sufficient reason for

changing their organization in the interests of the Region as a whole.

Water Regions, as we have seen, need defining in relation to the lie of the land, and also need relating closely to the areas of Catchment and Drainage Boards. For these reasons, they are unlikely to coincide with Regions defined for other purposes; and there is of course the further problem that the great conurbations cannot, for purposes of water supply, properly be cut off from the Regions surrounding them. I suggest, accordingly, that the Regional Water Boards be *ad hoc* bodies, made up of representatives from the Regional Councils concerned, including those from whose areas water is drawn as well as those to whose populations it is supplied. Thus, the great Birmingham water undertaking would pass under the control of a Regional Water Board representing the Greater Birmingham Region, the West Midland Region, and the Region of Wales from which the supplies are drawn. Similar joint arrangements would hold good for other Regions, where supplies need to cross regional frontiers. Where, however, a local government Region can serve also as a self-contained Water Region, there is of course no reason why the Regional Water Board should not be wholly appointed by a single Regional Council.

Electricity supply includes three stages—generation, main-line transmission, and local distribution. Of these, the second only has been already ‘nationalized’, in the hands of the Central Electricity Board, though the Board has also a restricted power to build and operate generating stations of its own where it cannot find any other body prepared to undertake the task on reasonable terms. Generation has been for the most part in the hands of Power Companies, of Municipalities, and of Local Electricity Supply Companies; but there have been also a large number of private generating stations owned by large industrial concerns—*e.g.* the Lots Road Station which supplies the London Underground. Local distribution has been divided between municipalities and supply companies, which may either generate their own current or merely transform supplies purchased from the Central Electricity Board’s ‘Grid’. Many municipal systems either supply current in bulk to areas outside the municipal

boundaries or actually operate distributing systems over an area wider than that of the Local Authority which owns them. It is the Government's declared policy—and it seems clearly the right one—to put the entire business of generating current for sale under the ownership and management of a National Electricity Board, by transferring all 'selected' generating stations (*i.e.* all that are not to be shut down) to the Board and giving it the exclusive right to build new ones, wherever their output is to be sold and not used entirely by the body which constructs them. Distribution of electric current presents greater difficulties; but the balance of advantage seems to lie in amalgamating the existing concerns, public and private, into regional groups, under the ownership of Regional Electricity Boards closely linked up with, but at the same time independent of, the C.E.B., from which they will purchase their supplies of current.

The question is: What areas are most suitable for this purpose? For the purposes of the 'Grid', England and Wales were divided up into seven Regions, for each of which a separate scheme was prepared, to be administered under the central control of the C.E.B. These areas do not at all coincide with the local government Regions marked out in earlier chapters of this book. One of them extends from Central and North Wales through Lancashire and Cheshire to Cumberland and Westmorland; another includes all South Wales with the whole of South-West England and most of the South, right up to the Hampshire-Sussex border. A third group London with Cambridgeshire on the north and Sussex on the south; and a fourth, called Central England, puts together Birmingham and most of the West and East Midlands. The McGowan Report on the Distribution of Electricity, published in 1936, put forward a scheme for the amalgamation of the distributing agencies into larger concerns; but this, too, bore no relation to the shape of local government Regions. It seems unlikely that any new survey that may be made in connection with the projected legislation for reorganizing the distributive side of the industry will yield an arrangement coincident with what is suitable for more general purposes of local government co-ordination. The grouping of electricity undertakings will almost inevitably follow to a great extent lines laid down by the haphazard developments of the past;

# ELECTRICITY BILL

*Map showing Boundaries of Area Electricity Boards*



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and any attempt to square them with the general requirements of regional government could only result in many places in an unsatisfactory compromise. In some areas, no doubt, coincidence will occur; and, where it does, so much the better. But it will certainly not occur everywhere; and accordingly, as in the case of water supply, there will have to be *ad hoc* Regional Electricity Boards, made up of representatives of the general Regional Authorities concerned. Perhaps, in both instances, there should be, besides these representative members, a nucleus of full-time members, chosen by them, to give expert attention to problems of administration and technical development. In addition, I think the National Board should be represented on each Regional Board.<sup>1</sup>

As for gas, proposals have been repeatedly put forward for a national 'gas grid'. I do not believe that there is any case for such a plan, though there may be one for regional gas grids in a few special areas on the model of what has been done in Sheffield (and much more in other countries) to utilize surplus supplies of producer gas. In general, the economy of gas-production is based much less on large-scale output than on high technical efficiency, almost irrespective of scale; and this efficiency can be secured by the linking up of larger and smaller plants under a unified technical and commercial control. Gas supply is at present divided between municipal and company ownership; and the companies are largely linked together by means of holding companies or through the actual acquisition of smaller by the larger concerns. Some of these groups of companies are on a compact, regional basis; but some of the holding companies own widely scattered gas undertakings in different parts of the country. This situation has arisen out of a competitive process of buying up the smaller concerns, and has led to a most unsatisfactory muddle. The Government has already announced its intention of transferring the entire industry to public ownership; and I feel sure the best way of administering it thereafter will be to set up a National Gas Commission, with the first function of drawing up a scheme of amalgamation on a regional basis under public auspices, and thereafter of undertaking research activities and maintaining a national advisory technical service. The actual conduct of gas undertakings should be

<sup>1</sup> For discussion of the new 1947 areas, see p. 264.

placed in the hands of a series of Regional Gas Boards, under the co-ordinating control of the National Commission. There would be no great difficulty in making these Boards coincide, in respect of areas, with the general local government Regions, except that special arrangements would need to be made in the areas of the great conurbations. Probably the best course would be to constitute the Gas Boards *ad hoc*, but on a basis of nomination by the Regional Authorities concerned, and perhaps with the provision suggested already for certain technical members who would be appointed to serve on a full-time basis.

I am not discussing the question whether gas and electricity ought to be in some way brought under a common control, in order to avoid wasteful competition and to secure the use of each for the purposes for which it is best fitted. This is not a question of local or of regional government, but of national policy. Certainly there ought to be some co-ordination of fuel and power services at a national level, and there will need to be some common authority to decide, for example, how much capital is to be spent on the development of each service, where it is to be spent, and what price policies are to be followed. Subject, however, to this central co-ordination the balance of advantage appears to lie in keeping the administration of gas and electricity services separate at the regional and local levels, and in determining the best regional areas for each service apart from the other.

Internal Transport has five main branches—railway transport, road passenger transport, road goods transport, canal and river transport, and air transport—to which we can in effect add coast-wise shipping. Of these only road passenger transport is at present carried on by Local Authorities upon any scale that matters, though these bodies also own and manage both ports and aerodromes. As I write, a Bill for the nationalization of railways, canals, and a large section of goods transport by road is before Parliament; and this Bill also includes clauses under which regional schemes can be drawn up for the acquisition and conduct of road passenger service. There are also to be regional port schemes in suitable cases; and air transport has already been brought under public control. The main questions that affect Local and Regional Government in this range of services are clearly

road passenger transport on the one hand and ports, docks and aerodromes on the other. There is everything to be said for organizing road passenger transport as far as possible on a regional basis, in order to avoid excessive centralization. But here again it is hardly to be hoped for that the Regions suitable for general administrative purposes will serve the purpose. Road passenger services, where they are of more than purely local importance, are bound to be centred largely on a few big cities—London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for example. Evidently, if they are to be organized on a regional basis, the conurbations must be included together with the Regions surrounding them. Here again then, it appears that what is needed is an *ad hoc* arrangement of areas, embracing more than one Region in respect of the services covering longish distances, but also leaving room for schemes confined to relatively small areas falling within an administrative Region.

I am inclined to suggest that there should be a small number of *ad hoc* Regional Road Passenger Transport Authorities, made up of representatives appointed by the general Regional Authorities concerned, together with persons appointed by the national Transport Commission; and that these Regional Transport Authorities should be given power both to conduct long-distance services (including, by permission, services travelling beyond their areas), and to license local services to be run over shorter distances by Local Road Passenger Transport Boards. These Local Boards, I suggest, should be similarly made up of representatives of the major Local Authorities of the areas concerned, with regional representatives appointed by the Regional Transport Boards. The Regions I have in mind for this purpose are those adopted under the Road Traffic Act of 1933 for the control of licensing. There are ten of them for England and Wales, with their respective headquarters in Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Birmingham, Cardiff, Bristol, Cambridge, and London—which figures twice, as the headquarters of both the Metropolitan and the South-Eastern Regions. North Wales is grouped with Lancashire and Cheshire, Cumberland with the North-East, Plymouth and the <sup>W</sup>South-East with Bristol. It goes without saying that there will have to be special arrangements, as there are indeed to-day in many cases, for

the co-ordination of road passenger with railway services; but to attempt any discussion of this issue would take me much too far afield. Nor do I propose to enter into the complex question of the ownership and administration of ports and harbours, air ports, or other auxiliary transport services.

The essential purpose of this chapter has been to show that, as far as the four main public utility services in which Local Authorities have been extensively active are concerned, there is no case for an attempt to devise a uniform arrangement of areas, or to make their Regions coincide with the Regions that are needed as units of general planning and large-scale administration. Each of the four services appears to need to be treated 'on its own', and to call for different regional arrangements. This, however, is no good reason for dissociating the control of these four services entirely from Local or Regional Government, or for placing them either under national administration or under regional authorities appointed from above and entirely unrelated to the organs of Regional Government. On the contrary, it is of the utmost importance that there should be close links between these *ad hoc* Regional Boards and the elected representatives of the local government Regions. This is the democratic way, calculated both to avoid the dangers of irresponsible bureaucracy and to give the citizens of the various districts a real voice in shaping, by vocal protest and suggestion, the organization of the services into the patterns that they like best.

This means that, in considering the right areas for the general purposes of regional organization, these four public utility services can be left out of account. Where the patterns coincide, so much the better; where they do not, no great harm is done.

There is one other great public utility service—the greatest of all—in which Local Authorities have in recent times come to be deeply concerned. I mean, of course, Housing. This concerns the Local Authorities in three separate ways, apart from its planning aspects, which I have already discussed. It affects them as the makers and enforcers of building bye-laws, as the owners of houses for letting, and as actual house-builders and house-repairers by the method of Direct Labour. It also affects them in a fourth, less important way, as the providers of finance for house-purchase under the Small Dwellings

Acquisition Acts; but this aspect of their interest can be left aside.

The question that concerns us here is this. How ought the three housing powers to which I have just referred to be assigned as between Regional and Local Authorities of different kinds?

- (a) *Building Bye-Laws.* I think building bye-laws ought to be made by the Regional Authorities, but enforced by the major *Local* Authorities within each Region. This would not preclude variations within the regional area—*e.g.* between built-up and country districts—but it would secure a desirable measure of uniformity of standards, and would help both architects and builders to know better where they stand. In the conurbations I think enforcement as well as making of bye-laws should be in the hands of the authority for the conurbation as a whole, but with power to delegate enforcement to the smaller authorities within their areas.
- (b) *House-Ownership.* I think the provision of houses should be in general a function not of the Regional Authorities, but of the major Local Authorities within the Regions. But (1) rent-subsidies, where operated, should be on a uniform regional basis; (2) the great conurbations should be the main housing authorities for the whole of their areas; (3) the Regional Authorities should be empowered to undertake house-building in connection with slum-clearance, dispersal, and the establishment of New Towns, the promotion of Industrial Trading Estates, and other special ventures calling for large-scale organization; (4) the Regional Authorities should be empowered to act as builders' merchants and to undertake the manufacture for sale to other public bodies, as well as for their own use, of building materials and components, and to undertake or take part in projects of research and development of new methods of construction; and (5) the smaller, as well as the larger, Local Authorities should have house-building powers, at any rate in rural areas, concurrently with the other agencies, and should be entitled to any subsidies on equal terms.

- (c) *Direct Labour*. The question whether to employ outside builders or to build by Direct Labour should be at the discretion of each Housing Authority, except that each Regional Authority should maintain a mobile building unit of its own, to be directed to any points at which it could most usefully supplement the local agencies, especially in handling major projects of construction.

Building and Housing, unlike the public utility services discussed earlier in this chapter, raise no special difficulties about areas. They can be perfectly well organized in units corresponding to the regional and local divisions appropriate to the general purposes of public administration. I propose to say no more about them here, having discussed them fairly fully in a companion volume, published in 1945.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Building and Planning*. By G. D. H. Cole. Cassell and Co. 1945.

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL FINANCE

THIS is not a book about the very difficult subject of Local Government Finance. If, however, I were to say nothing at all about that vexed question I should rightly be accused of an entirely unrealistic approach. Nothing is more obvious than that the establishment of larger—that is to say, of regional—units of administration involves finding sources from which the activities of such bodies can be at least in part financed, or that it would be a most unpopular, as well as a most unjust, way of financing them to place the burden upon local rates, at any rate in anything like their present form. The rating system, far from being in a position to bear additional burdens, stands in urgent need of relief, and is already near breaking point under the strains imposed on it by the growth of local services and of their cost, in spite of the additional grants made in aid of local expenditure out of central exchequer funds.

The situation in this respect has been made worse and not better by the De-rating Act of 1929—perhaps the worst of all inter-war measures. De-rating, in spite of the compensating grants paid out of the Exchequer, has acted to the detriment of small householders and of shopkeepers, and has reduced the rating system to the last absurdity of unfair incidence. To the extent to which the ideas propounded in this book involve a net addition to local government services, and therewith to their cost, it is obviously out of the question to propose paying for them out of the product of local rates, even aided by additional percentage grants from national funds.

Indeed, I should dearly like to be able with a good conscience to propose the abolition of local rates and the substitution for them of some less inequitable form of local taxation. But,

like many others who have entertained the same wish, I see no chance of doing this, and can only propose that the system be made as little unfair as it can be made by more uniform valuation and assessment, and that the false step taken in 1929 be firmly retraced, and rates levied on all forms of property formerly subject to them—including, if possible, agricultural holdings at the full annual value. On this last point, as we are likely to be subsidizing agriculture in any event, I would much sooner see the agriculturist receiving his entire subsidy in the open and paying rates on the full value of his holding, just as, if subsidies are to be paid to industry, I prefer them to be open subsidies and not tax remissions. I recognize that local rates, even after these reforms, will remain in many respects an unsatisfactory sort of tax; but, like others, I have failed after much searching to devise any workable alternative. Rates must be kept; but we must be particularly careful not to pile too many burdens upon them.

Under the system proposed in this book sources of finance need to be found, apart from what may be received in the form of grants-in-aid from the National Exchequer, for three main types and for one lesser type of Regional or Local Authorities:

- (a) *Regional Planning Authorities*, which may be either County Authorities or Authorities covering more than one County, and will in either case include the County Borough areas as well as the rest of the Counties concerned;
- (b) *Major Local Authorities*, which may be either 'Incorporations', *i.e.* town-and-country areas, above a certain size, or County Councils in their administrative aspects, covering the smaller but not the larger 'Incorporations';
- (c) *Middling Local Authorities*—that is, 'Incorporations' not large enough to be administratively independent of the County Councils in respect of all functions other than those attached to the Regions;
- (d) *Small Local Authorities*—that is, lesser authorities holding a limited jurisdiction over part of the area of an

'Incorporation', or exercising similar powers over a 'community' area inside a conurbation.

This classification excludes the great conurbations, which need to be considered separately. It also excludes Joint Planning Authorities representing more than one Region. These latter will obviously finance their activities by precept upon the Regional Authorities represented upon them, and accordingly raise no special financial problem.

The main difficulty is obviously that of finding separate sources of revenue on the one hand for the Regional Authorities, including the Counties to the extent to which they exercise powers of a regional type, and on the other hand for the major and middling Local Authorities. It is not necessary to look for separate sources of finance for these two types, as they will not exist side by side in the same areas.

It seems both evident and unavoidable that the *Local*, as distinct from the Regional Authorities will have to continue to rely on local rates as their main source of revenue raised within their own areas, and that other means will need to be found for financing the Regional Authorities, including the Counties in respect of their regional activities. My answer to this conundrum is entirely without novelty: it is the oft-repeated proposal to introduce a local, or rather a regional, income-tax, though I also wish to suggest certain supplementary sources of regional revenue. The main objection that has always been raised to projects of local income-tax has been that Great Britain is too small a country for such a system to work successfully; and it is indeed abundantly plain that it could not work within existing local government areas. Nor could it work if it were to be levied separately, Region by Region, in the regional areas proposed in this book; for, to take but one objection, this would involve levying it separately in the great conurbations and in the Regions from which they are to be excluded. If regional income-tax is to be a practicable proposition, it must be levied at a uniform rate over areas considerably more extensive than my proposed Local Government Regions.

I have no cut-and-dried scheme; but I suggest, quite tentatively, that the thing could be managed if England were treated for this purpose as made up of not more than five Divisions, as follows:

Table 18

## PROPOSED DIVISIONAL TAXATION AREAS

*Regions and Conurbations Included*

Division I	North-West	North-Western, with Greater Manchester and Merseyside (that is, all Lancashire and Cheshire, except perhaps Furness.)
Division II	Northern	Northern, North-Eastern, and Yorkshire, with Tyneside (that is, Yorks, Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmorland.)
Division III	Midland	West Midland, East Midland, with Greater Birmingham
Division IV	Western	Western, South-Western, Southern
Division V	South-East	East Anglia, South-Eastern, Eastern, with Greater London

The purpose of this division is twofold. It is meant, in the first place, to reduce, though no scheme can wholly remove, the difficulties of assessment where there are doubts about the district in which a taxpayer normally resides. But it is meant also, in the second place, to avoid extreme differences of wealth and poverty between the Divisions. Such Regions as the Northern (Cumberland and Westmorland) or the South-Western (Devonshire and Cornwall) are clearly in no position to stand alone. On the other hand, the Greater London Region obviously needs to have included with it a large area of countryside in order to balance things up. Even larger Divisions might further improve the balance; but if the Divisions were to be made too big the local or regional character of the tax would be destroyed. On the whole, I think I have suggested the most workable compromise; but there is an implicit condition. The balance will be upset unless Great Britain as a whole successfully maintains a situation of fairly 'full employment'; for the incidence of serious unemployment will be bound to differ, as it has done in the past, from one part of the country to another. Wales constitutes a difficulty; for my scheme

assumes that it, and also Scotland, will stand by themselves. But I propose that the Government, in making grants-in-aid to the Regions—which will be essential to supplement the funds raised within them—shall make use of some sort of weighted formula similar in principle, though not in weighting, to the formula which was adopted in connection with the De-rating Act of 1929.

The proceeds of the 'divisional' income tax, levied in the way I have described, should, I suggest, be apportioned among the Regions falling within each Division, and supplemented by a national grant-in-aid; in such a way that the sums received by the Regions from both sources combined would be weighted to some extent according to needs. It would, of course, be most convenient for the 'divisional' tax to be collected by the national income tax authorities, in order to avoid duplication of administrative machinery. It follows from the system proposed that it would not be open to any single Region to vary the rate of tax, which would have to be uniform over each entire Division, though not necessarily over the country as a whole. The Regional Authorities, therefore, as far as they depended on this tax and on the accompanying grant-in-aid, would have no control over their own incomes, save to the extent of taking part with other Regions in the same Division in settling the rate of tax. This would be exceedingly awkward, if the income tax *plus* the grant-in-aid constituted their sole source of income; but it does not matter at all provided that they have additional sources which are under their control. My suggestion for meeting this difficulty is that the divisional income tax should be levied only on personal incomes, but that the Regional Authorities should be entitled to levy, up to a fixed maximum in the £, a tax on corporate income arising out of property within the regional area. This tax should not be allowed to constitute more than a 'marginal', or supplementary, source of income, much smaller in amount than the revenue accruing from the 'divisional' income tax *plus* the accompanying grant-in-aid.

Over and above this, when and if the land is made public property, I should like to see the *net* product—that is to say, the annual income derived from the land *minus* any sum payable as compensation to its former owners—put into a

fund which would be distributed among the Regions. This, however, is not in practice a very important point, as the allocation of this source of revenue to the Regions would inevitably influence the size of the grant-in-aid appropriated from the proceeds of national taxation.

I have spoken so far only of the Regions; but the scheme put forward earlier contemplates that in different parts of the country functions would be shared in different ways between the Regions and the Counties included in them. Such variations would involve differences in the allocation of both divisional income-tax proceeds and grants-in-aid as between the Regional and County Authorities, and also in the levying of regional taxes on impersonal property. Where the Counties assumed the greater part of the functions assigned to the more-than-local authorities, they would receive the major part of the revenue accruing from the 'divisional' income tax, and from the National Exchequer, and also naturally the major part of any *ad hoc* grants payable in respect of particular services. I do not suggest *separate* sources of revenue for the Counties and for the Regions as far as they are covering the same range of functions, but only a sharing in different proportions of revenues drawn from the same sources.

No doubt, in Counties which are mainly agricultural and where towns are mostly small, the County authority may need to undertake for the entire county area certain services which in more populous parts of the country will be undertaken by the proposed 'town-and-country' Incorporations. In such cases, the County, in respect of the services thus placed in its hands, would of course count as a major Local Authority, and would be empowered to levy a local rate; and what I am about to say about the sources of 'Incorporation' revenue must be taken as applying to the Counties as far as they are entrusted with the carrying on of services conducted elsewhere by the Incorporations. I hope this is sufficiently clear.

The Regions being provided for in the ways suggested, the major Local Authorities within them—that is, the 'Incorporations' and the Counties in respect of local as distinct from regional services—would derive their main income, as similar authorities do at present, from two principal sources—local rates, but rates levied on the properties de-rated in 1929 as well as on others, and grants-in-aid. It is, however,

a moot point whether these grants-in-aid should be derived direct from the National Exchequer, or through the Regions. I think, probably, the two systems should be combined, the 'Incorporations' receiving a 'block' grant from the Region and also 'percentage' grants from the National Exchequer in aid of certain particular services—for example, education and health. The 'Incorporations' would be free, subject to the views of their inhabitants, to levy rates at any levels they thought fit; but, as we have seen, methods of valuation and assessment would be made more uniform, and some of the more startling discrepancies would thus disappear. As Mr. and Mrs. Hicks have pointed out, one effect of re-valuation would almost certainly be to increase the relative assessments of new houses as against old, with important social consequences; but to discuss this and cognate problems would take me too far afield.

The final type of authority that needs its own source of income is the small authority within the conurbation or 'Incorporation'. Here again, in default of any practicable alternative, the answer must lie in allowing the small authority to levy, at its own discretion, a supplementary rate. This rate, which would vary from district to district, should be collected by the 'Incorporation', which should also make grants-in-aid to the smaller bodies within it, including both a minimum 'block' grant and 'percentage' grants in aid of certain particular expenditures. Nor do I see any good reason why the National Exchequer should not also pay direct grants to the small authorities, in aid of particular services which the Government wishes to see expanded for national reasons.

All this is, of course, the barest outline. It is enough, however, to make clear the principles; and that is all I need. The scheme proposed would mean that each citizen, above a certain income level, would be paying two kinds of income tax, one national and one 'divisional', on his personal income, and that each person liable to local rates would be receiving a single rate demand. The only new machinery needed would be that required for the assessment and collection of 'divisional' income tax; and this task would be assigned to the expert hands of the existing income tax authorities. Similar machinery could be used for appeals, of which there would unavoidably be a large number during the early stages of the new system;

or, if need were, a special Appeals Tribunal could be set up to decide test cases. The plan, in comparison with many that have been put forward, has at any rate the merit of simplicity.

It may be objected that the plan will not work unless a large proportion of the total revenue of the Regional and Local Authorities is derived from either 'divisional' income tax or national income tax or national grants-in-aid, and that the former of these will be unavoidably competitive with national income tax and the latter involve too great a strain on national taxable capacity. These two objections are really one and the same; and I defy anyone to find a plan of local government finance that is not open to them. The rates are already strained beyond endurance, and there is no possibility of reconstructing local finances on the same relation between local and national taxation as existed before the war. Local and regional services cannot be cut down: on the contrary, all parties are deeply committed to expanding them as fast as the sheer physical obstacles can be overcome. The finance, accordingly, must be found; and there is no way of finding it that will not compete with other claims. The private citizen has, in the last resort, but one income; and, however a tax is levied on him, on that income it must somehow fall.

No doubt, there is an alternative form of taxation which is levied, not on incomes directly, but indirectly either on commodities and services or on the enterprises which produce them. In societies in which there are large inequalities of income, such indirect taxation is usually regarded as objectionable when it passes a fairly low level, because of its regressive effects. These effects arise whether the taxes are put on commodities, as is largely the case to-day, (*e.g.* Purchase Tax and, much more important, the taxes on drink and tobacco), or are levied by running publicly owned businesses at a profit and applying the surplus in aid of public revenue (*e.g.* the Post Office, or any municipal trading enterprise run at a profit in aid of the rates). In a more equalitarian society, the objections to these forms of taxation would lose their force; but they cannot be of much help in dealing with the present problems of local and regional finance for the simple reason that, as we have seen, the tendency is to transfer services which could be run at a profit from local to national operation.

There is, at any rate for the present, no answer to the problem to be discovered here.

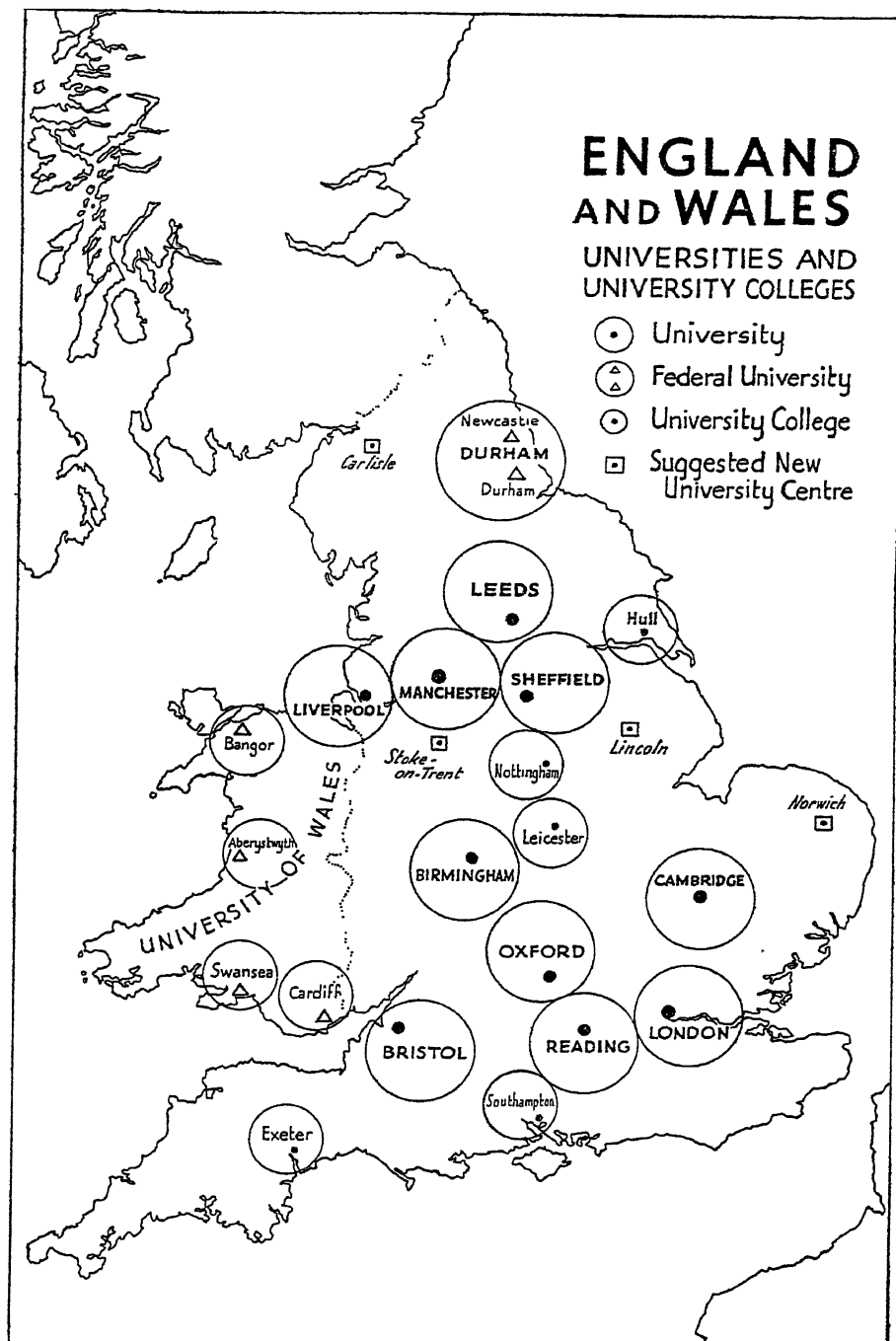
It comes to this—that, to the extent to which, either nationally or regionally or locally, we decide to widen the range of publicly provided services, the costs of carrying on Local, Regional and National Government are bound to increase, and the levy on private incomes is bound to increase with them, as long as the present system of distributing incomes remains in force. A Socialist economy could, instead of paying out most of the 'national income' in private incomes, hold back what was needed for financing public services and distribute only the balance to its citizens in the form of cash incomes. But this would not mean that the citizens were not meeting out of their labours the costs of the public services: it would mean only that they were meeting them in a different way. The moral is that there is no way of keeping down the 'burden' of public services except that of making the whole national income as large as possible, and therewith ensuring that the public services are efficiently run, so that the people get full value for what they cost.

## AN EXAMPLE—EDUCATION

I SHALL attempt in this chapter to make my proposals more concrete by taking a particular range of services, and by showing how, under the system of Regional and Local Government which I have proposed, functions connected with them would be distributed among the various types of authority. Let me say at once that no group of services can be taken as in any way typical of all, or of most, and that education is clearly among those which call for fairly unified administration over quite large areas: so that the example I have taken is better suited for illustrating the working of regional than of the smaller local institutions. Any example, however, will have a bias the one way or the other; and I have chosen education both because it is one of the largest, as well as the most expensive, of locally administered services and because the general shape of the service that is to be provided has been recently re-defined by the Education Act of 1944, so that one knows where to start. This is a strong reason for choosing educational rather than health services, which are at present in the melting-pot. Besides, I know much more about education than I do about public health.

The educational services, as far as they are intended to be run under public auspices, or with a substantial amount of public financial help, under the Education Act of 1944 or under other recent government decisions, can be classified broadly under the following heads:

- (1) *Infant Schools, Nursery Schools*, and other provision for very young children;
- (2) *Primary Schools*, for children up to about eleven;
- (3) *Secondary Schools*, for children over eleven, including *Grammar Schools, Modern Schools*, and *Technical Schools*, or schools combining two or more of these types;



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

- (4) *County Colleges*, for part-time education of those who leave school at the minimum leaving age;
- (5) *Special Schools*, for backward or deficient children;
- (6) *Technical Colleges*, mainly for part-time or evening students, in most cases with some provision for non-technical work, and sometimes combined with (7) or (8);
- (7) *Commercial Colleges*, like (6), but dealing mainly with commercial subjects;
- (8) *Art Schools*, covering both 'pure' and applied arts and crafts;
- (9) *Teachers' Training Colleges*, as distinct from University Training Departments;
- (10) *Universities and University Colleges*, including their Departments for training teachers;
- (11) *Adult Education Classes*, conducted directly by *Local Education Authorities*, either in special Institutes or not;
- (12) *Adult Education Classes*, conducted by *voluntary bodies* such as the Workers' Educational Association, either alone or in conjunction with University bodies; and *University Extra-mural Education* as a whole.
- (13) *Adult Colleges*, run by voluntary bodies.
- (14) *Agricultural Colleges*, and other forms of state-aided agricultural education.

This list is not meant to be complete. It leaves out, for example, Approved Schools. But it covers the main kinds of publicly provided or publicly aided education, and will suffice to illustrate amply all the points I wish to discuss.

The question is: What type of Regional or Local Authority ought to be given the responsibility for providing, organizing, managing and supervising these various kinds of education? Is the answer to be one and the same for them all, or is it to differ from one group to another?

There is, so far, an intentional ambiguity in the question itself. It does not follow that the body which is responsible for supervising a service, or even for ensuring that adequate provision is made, must in all cases itself conduct the service; nor does it follow that the body which conducts the service must in all cases do so without being under an obligation to listen to other bodies' advice. There is, moreover, such a

thing as 'delegation' of powers; and this 'delegation' has received a large measure of recognition in the Education Act of 1944. Accordingly, we must not expect a perfectly simple answer.

I shall begin, however, with a general paragraph that is at any rate simple. I believe it is a correct notion that in each area a single public body should be made responsible for drawing up a comprehensive scheme of educational provision, including all the kinds of education that are to be in any way financed out of funds raised over an area smaller than that of the whole country. Such a scheme need not include the direct provision of every type of education by the body concerned; for in some branches its activity may take the form of financial aid to enable students to attend educational institutions that are not under its direct control. But the scheme should include the actual provision at any rate of primary and of secondary schools, including all three kinds of secondary education, of County Colleges, and of some forms of Adult Education. Not merely the planning of all these forms of education, but at any rate the major part of the actual provision, must be the responsibility in any area of one and the same public authority.

The authority that is made responsible for this range of services must, then, be large enough to conduct them effectively, and to make a sufficient all-round provision to meet varying needs. For this purpose, the *smaller* Incorporations clearly will not serve. In Norfolk or in Devonshire, for example, no smaller area will serve than the County as a whole, either, as now, with the County Boroughs excluded, or, better, with their areas thrown in. For clearly, in the fields of both Grammar School and Technical Education, the large Boroughs are indispensable for the working of any really satisfactory scheme. Let us, then, treat the County, including the County Boroughs, as the minimum unit. Clearly, however, a good many Counties are too small to make a satisfactory all-round provision, and a good many more are the wrong shape, so that, for a number of forms of higher education, many pupils will get the best service by crossing the County boundary. The Region, rather than the County, is in most parts of England the best basic educational unit for the main forms of school provision. I therefore propose that, except in very

large and populous Counties which show a strong desire to maintain their independence, the Regional Authority be recognized as the main responsible body for school education.

I do not mean by this that the Regional Authority ought to run all the schools, or even all those which are publicly 'provided', and have no association with any outside body, such as a Church. In the first place, as I have already suggested, I want the small-scale Local Authority of every 'community' or 'neighbourhood' area to act as the board of 'managers' for the local primary school or schools, with some representatives added on the nomination of the responsible major authority. Secondly, I want Nursery and Infant Schools to be actually run by the small Local Authorities, subject to inspection and supervision by the responsible major authority, and also subject to power to the latter to take over the management temporarily, with the consent of the Ministry of Education, where satisfactory standards are not observed. It is important for the schools that look after very small children to have the closest possible contacts with the parents and with the homes; and this can best be secured, in the towns as well as in the country, by putting the responsibility directly on the small local community.

Thirdly, I want the *larger* 'Incorporations' to run their own schools, both primary and secondary, under powers delegated from the Regions and subject only to national inspection, which must however be so directed as to secure and report upon their compliance with the conditions of the regional scheme. But I also want *every* secondary school, to whatever type it belongs, to have its own Board of Governors and to enjoy a substantial degree of independence provided that it maintains the standards required of it under the regional scheme. I think the Boards of Governors of such schools should be made up mainly of persons appointed by the public Educational Authorities, in such a way that every Board would include both regional or county and local nominees. Of course, wherever the County and not the Region is the main authority, the reader will understand that here and in the preceding paragraph the County and not the Regional Authority is the body I have in mind.

Fourthly, I want elasticity and room for experiment in settling the best units both for County Colleges, which are still

to be made, and for Adult Education, which is still in the making. In Adult Education, particularly, the right relations between public Education Authorities, Universities, and voluntary bodies such as the Workers' Educational Association have still to be worked out, and there is room for a good deal of diverse experiment in different parts of the country. It would be a profound error to force Adult Education, which depends on spontaneity of demand and makes widely differing appeals to different groups of people, into any rigid administrative structure, or to use the 'prevention of overlapping' as an excuse for not making the widely varying kinds of provision that are required.

What I have said so far covers mainly the first four of the fourteen groups into which I have divided public activity in education, and also in part groups 11 and 12. The fifth group, Special Schools, needs a large-scale authority able to apply expert methods and to afford first-class advisers on its staff. It must therefore be placed in the hands of the Region or large County, and not of any lesser authority. Similarly, the sixth, seventh and eighth groups require organization over fairly large areas. Individual Technical Colleges cannot be well equipped to teach all subjects and must collaborate over large areas if they are to offer a proper range of studies, especially at the more advanced stages. The right unit for the organization of technical education cannot be smaller than the Region, and may easily be larger. Wherever a great conurbation exists, technical education clearly needs to be organized in such a way as to include both the conurbation and the areas surrounding it. Commercial Colleges need much less co-ordination over wide areas; and there is no good reason why they should not be conducted by Incorporations under powers delegated from the Regional Authorities. Art Schools, on the other hand, are subject to the same conditions as Technical Colleges as far as they are dealing with the applied arts. Where they are concerned mainly with fine art, what matters is not the area over which they are organized but the personality of the Director and the existence of a good Governing Body to help him. I know of no administrative prescription for ensuring this state of affairs.

As for the ninth group, Teachers' Training Colleges, I want, as soon as possible, to put an end to their existence, *in*

*their present form.* It seems to me all wrong to take boys and girls from school and segregate them in special establishments where they are to be trained as teachers with no companions except other teachers in the making. I want teachers to be taught together with young people who are intending to enter other professions, such as factory welfare work, social service in one or another of its many branches, or indeed any of a wide range of callings. I do not deny that teachers need special *training*, as well as further education after they leave school; but I do emphatically deny that putting them straight into a Teachers' Training College is the right way of giving them this training. When we have got things rightly organized, all intending teachers will go either to some sort of University or to a Technical College or Art School. Some of them will get their special training as teachers while they are doing their regular University or College courses, and will take longer over them on this account. Others will go on to a special Training Course, as students do now in University Training Departments, after taking their degrees or technical diplomas. There may be a case for retaining those Training Colleges which specialize in Froebel methods of training teachers for very young children; but apart from that I believe the whole system as it now exists is wrong.

If teachers are to be educated in Universities or in Technical Colleges, supplemented by special training in departments attached to these bodies, clearly there is no place for Teachers' Training Colleges as such, and no question therefore arises about the type of authority that should be responsible for running them. Where specialized Colleges, such as those for Froebel training, are needed, they should be run either under national auspices or by voluntary bodies with adequate aid from national public funds.

This brings me to the tenth group—Universities and University Colleges. I have always believed that every University ought to have a dual aspect—as an independent centre of teaching and research unconcerned, *as such*, with locality, and as a regional centre of higher education and research serving a wide area round it, not only with extramural classes of many kinds, but also with inspiration to all the educational institutions within its range, and indeed for much besides the purely educational side of its regional

population. It ought to provide refresher courses not only for teachers, but also for others who need them. It ought to help the research workers who are employed in businesses within its area, as well as the teachers in Technical Colleges, to keep themselves fresh and up-to-date; and it ought to take an interest both in regional history and in current surveys of regional problems and affairs. In effect, it ought to be a point of focus for a large part of the life of the Region, with close contacts, cultural as well as technical, with the local institutions through which the spirit of community is expressed.

There are at present in England 11 Universities—Oxford, Cambridge, London, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, Bristol, Reading, and Durham (which consists of two sections, one at Durham and one at Newcastle-upon-Tyne)—and 5 University Colleges—Nottingham, Southampton, Exeter, Hull and Leicester. London is in effect several Universities in one—the University itself being mainly an examining body, and the Colleges virtually independent teaching institutions. Four of the Universities—London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham—and the Newcastle section of Durham University, are situated in areas which I have marked out as great conurbations to rank as autonomous Regions; but these Universities must clearly serve the neighbouring Regions as well as the ‘conurban’ areas. Including them, we get one Region—Yorkshire—with three University institutions—Leeds and Sheffield Universities in the West Riding and Hull University College in the East Riding; a second Region, the North-West, with two Universities—Manchester and Liverpool; two others with one University and one University College apiece—the East Midlands with Oxford and Leicester, and the Southern Region with Reading and Southampton; one Region—the North-Eastern—with a single University divided between two centres—Newcastle and Durham; three Regions—the West Midland, the Western, and the Eastern—with one University apiece—Birmingham, Bristol and Cambridge; two Regions with one University College each—the North Midland with Nottingham and the South-Western with Exeter; one Region—the South-Eastern—served in effect by London University; and only two Regions—East Anglia and the Northern—with no University institution at all within their frontiers.

The Universities and University Colleges are thus, on the whole, not badly distributed in relation to the regional arrangements proposed in this book. There are, however, a few fairly obvious gaps. There ought obviously to be some sort of University College in East Anglia—which cannot be adequately served from Cambridge—and Norwich seems the obvious place for it, if it is to be a civic University or College of a mainly non-residential kind. If it were to be mainly residential, Bury St. Edmunds would have great attractions; but that is out of the question as a centre for non-resident students. In the small Northern Region, consisting only of Cumberland and Westmorland, with perhaps the Furness district of Lancashire, there may not be a sufficient basis for a fully independent University College, even in face of the evident need for a large increase in the number of university students; but there should at least be room for an outlying College linked closely to King's College at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and making a third section of the University of Durham. In the South-Eastern Region, the nearness of London does not leave much opening: at or near Brighton would be the obvious location, if a new University institution were felt to be required. As for the rest of the country, the most urgent gap needing to be filled is surely in the West Midland Region, where Stoke-on-Trent, with its large population and its strong tradition of extra-mural work, has no University within reasonably easy reach. Here at all events a new University or University College ought to be set up. I should also like to strengthen the provision in the North Midland Region with a new University College at Lincoln, probably linked up with Nottingham in a joint body of full University status. I should like to see Southampton and Exeter, as well as Nottingham, raised at once to the status of independent Universities, and Hull and Leicester following suit in due course.

Given these developments, it would be possible to establish in every part of the country the requisite links between the Regional and Local Authorities responsible for general education and the Universities, without attempting to make University areas and areas of Regional Government coincide in any rigid way. There is no need for such rigid assimilation; for no one, I hope, will suggest that the Universities ought to be made subject to control by the Regional Authorities.

About groups eleven and twelve—Adult Education Classes conducted by Education Authorities directly or by voluntary bodies with aid from public funds—I have nothing much to add to what I have said already, except that they are best organized in both cases over fairly large areas and, to a great extent, over the same areas as University extra-mural work, with which they are closely connected. The thirteenth group—Adult Colleges—consists partly of institutions of an essentially national character, such as Ruskin College, Oxford, and the Co-operative College, near Loughborough, and partly of more localized institutions such as the Working Men's College in London, Vaughan College at Leicester, and a few institutions recently started by enterprising Local Education Authorities. Adult Colleges of the 'national' type do not concern us here; for they raise no problems of Local or Regional Government. The more local Colleges are best connected with large educational areas—Regions or at least Counties—though there is no reason why they should not have in addition close connections with the actual towns or villages in which they are placed. The Village Colleges in Cambridgeshire belong to yet a third type—being rather educational centres for groups of neighbouring villages than Colleges in the sense in which I have been using the word in the preceding paragraphs.

There remains only the fourteenth group—Agricultural Colleges—and of this I have nothing special to say, except that it seems desirable for such Colleges to draw on fairly large areas, to be closely linked up with the educational work done through Young Farmers' Clubs and similar bodies, and to remain in close connection with the Ministry of Agriculture, as they are at present.

The broad picture, then, of educational organization under the plan put forward in this book is one of unified planning of and responsibility for the main part of the school system, both primary and secondary, in all its branches, in the hands of Regional, or at least of County, Authorities—the County meaning, here as elsewhere in this book, the whole geographical area, including the County Boroughs. As between County and Region, I am not dogmatic, except that the smaller Counties certainly need grouping with their neighbours. This concentration of control in the hands of authorities covering either whole Regions or large Counties is not, however, meant

to exclude a large element of delegation to the Local Authorities, which should in especial have a considerable share in the conduct of their own primary schools. Nor is it meant to exclude purely *ad hoc* arrangements for the joint control of institutions which cannot be conveniently fitted into a regional pattern. I have in mind, for example, important Grammar Schools which serve areas extending across county or regional frontiers, or Special Schools catering for highly specialized needs. Moreover, I want the Nursery Schools to be controlled, subject only to supervision of standards, by the small Local Authorities that represent the actual social groups directly concerned. Technical education, on the other hand, seems to me to call for organization on at least a regional, and in some areas—where there are great conurbations—on a more than regional, scale.

As I said at the outset, there is, and can be, nothing 'typical' about the example I have chosen, or about any other that I might have put in its place. No important service is 'typical': each has highly special characteristics of its own. I felt, however, that if I failed to give any concrete example of what I had in mind I might be accused of being merely unrealistic; and it seemed better to illustrate untypically than not to illustrate at all. Any reader who is sufficiently interested can, I think, readily construct for himself a fair notion of what distribution of functions would follow from the general structure here put forward in relation to any main service at present carried on under local government auspices.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE POLITICS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL Government, some people maintain, ought not to be organized at all along party lines. A good many of those who use this phraseology appear to mean by it in effect that Local Government ought to be run by opponents of Socialism without a formal party label. The so-called 'Independents' who have held a large number of seats on Local Authorities have been for the most part, though not exclusively, Conservatives thinly disguised. This appeared plainly in the municipal elections of 1946, when a large number of 'Independents' suddenly appeared formally labelled as 'Conservatives', with the curious result that the Conservatives both lost a good many seats to Labour and emerged from the elections nominally more numerous than before. I am not of course suggesting that all 'Independents' have been disguised Conservatives. Some have been Liberals, and some candidates supported jointly by Liberals and Conservatives against Labour. Some have even been genuine Independents. But in general they have been anti-Socialists, and opponents of the development of municipal services, especially in the trading field.

Yet, of course, especially in country districts, a good deal of the feeling against allowing party politics in Local Government is genuine. Why, a good many people who are not themselves party-minded rather pathetically ask, cannot the best people of all parties and of none get together to manage the common affairs of the districts in which they live? Surely there must be a great many issues which do not divide them along party lines, and surely no party has a monopoly of the persons who are capable of giving good service as local Councillors? A man or woman may be an ardent Tory or Liberal, and at the same time just the right person to press the claims of aged persons for houses to suit them; and a man or woman may be a Socialist and yet show a profound lack of sympathy or understanding about, say, the collaboration

of the Local Authority with voluntary bodies in the field of Social Service.

These are respectable arguments, of most weight in the case of really small Local Authorities which are carrying on intimate community services. A Parish Council, for example, can hardly work well if one party is successful in capturing nearly all the seats on it. It needs to reflect the composition of the local community group as a whole, and to organize co-operation among members of it despite their political differences. The ideal Parish Council, or really small-scale Local Authority of any kind, will probably be without parties. Nevertheless, where actual Parish Councils or other small-scale authorities are composed mainly of anti-Socialists, however labelled, Socialists cannot be blamed for trying to capture seats on them in order to redress the balance.

In larger-scale Local Government, on the other hand, the party system is entirely justifiable. Issues are continually arising which do divide men and women on broadly the same questions of principle, or rather on the same domestic questions, as divide them in national politics. Shall housing policy be based mainly on public provision, or on encouraging private enterprise? Shall educational policy aim at giving, as far as is practicable, an equal chance to all, irrespective of the parents' incomes, and at making the content of education more democratic; or shall it aim at preserving the class system as much as possible and at the encouragement of 'snob' values? Shall this or that service be municipalized or left to private enterprise? Shall more or less be spent on services which, on the whole, are used by the poor rather than by the well-to-do? These are questions about which divisions of opinion run largely, though not exclusively, along party lines; and there is no getting away from them.

It is doubtless also true that, when the lines of policy have been decided, and the question is one of administration in committee, the party divisions become blurred, and some of the best committee members may be found among those who voted against the policy that is being followed—and that they are admirably helping to follow—before it was actually adopted. It is true that the disappearance of these members would lower the efficiency and the entire quality of the municipal body; and indeed it quite often happens that the very victors

who have compassed the defeat of a party opponent lament his disappearance from the Council Chamber or the Committee Room. Yet this cannot alter the fact that the big dividing issues of policy exist, and have to be settled, and that, if they are to be settled democratically, the party system is an indispensable instrument for the purpose—at any rate under any conditions at all like those which exist to-day.

The creation of Regional Authorities would, inevitably, mean that electoral contests for seats on them would be fought out on party lines, as they are on the London County Council, which is the nearest approach to a Regional Authority that at present exists. The main battle, at any rate in most areas, would obviously be between the Labour and the Conservative Parties, with the Liberals intervening in some areas and probably the Communists in others, and with more 'Independents' of various shades (mostly 'Toryish') than survive to-day in national politics. The procedure of the Regional Authorities would probably be in many respects rather like that of the L.C.C.—approximating to the parliamentary in the Council Chamber itself, but making full use of the committee system in its local government form—that is, of committees each covering a group of related functions and reporting to the main Council.

Although Regional Government may involve electoral contests along party lines and the division of the Regional Councils into party groups, it by no means follows that when it comes to administration there need be the strict party alignments which are unavoidable when policy is being determined in full Council. In this matter a great deal depends on the relations which exist between the elected Councillors and the salaried officials. In theory, under the local government system as it exists to-day, policy is a matter for the elected representatives of the people, and the task of the salaried officials is exclusively that of giving effect to the policy so laid down. But no one, I suppose, believes this to be a correct description of what actually happens, any more than anyone believes that Parliament and Ministers of the Crown lay down policies which are merely put into effect by highly-placed Civil Servants. Things simply could not happen so, as between Ministers who change and Parliaments that cannot attend to everything on the one hand, and permanent officials

with much expert knowledge and full command of large staffs on the other. Still less could things happen so in relation to Local Government, which is even more a matter of detailed administration, involving the determination of principles largely as an incident to decisions on particular cases. The strong-minded Town or County Clerk, or Education Officer, in practice does a great deal to influence, and even to settle, policies, above all where there is an absence of equally strong men among the elected Councillors. The same thing will obviously happen if Regional Authorities are set up, or indeed under any system of Local or Regional Government that can be devised.

One way of trying to prevent this irresponsibility of power is to accept the fact that the permanent official who is put at the head of the administrative machine will inevitably become a policy-maker as well as an executant and to provide for the popular election of the official, so as to make him, as well as the elected Councillors, responsible to the public. This, however, has the effect of increasing his power very greatly; for if he is as much the representative of the public as the Councillors are, what claim can they have to give him orders? This remedy is certainly very much worse than the disease. A second remedy is to have a body of full-time Councillors, who differ from the officials in being elected and in having to face re-election at stated intervals. The disadvantages of this course are, first, that it would involve having only a few such Councillors, and there would be difficulty in representing small communities existing inside larger areas, and, secondly, that, with no assurance of re-election, it would be difficult to get really good men to give up other careers and accept nomination. A third solution, which seems to work under Russian conditions, is to abandon the sharp theoretical distinction between Councillors and officials, and to allow the officials to take part freely in policy discussions with the elected members, to express their opinions, and even to vote. This system, however, virtually implies the 'one-party' system of politics that prevails in the Soviet Union: it is not applicable to present conditions in Great Britain.

We are led back, then, to the conclusion that there is no way of preventing full-time officials from making policy as well as executing it, except the way of improving the quality

of the elected representatives of the people and of getting a better instructed body of public opinion behind them both to egg them on and to criticize their doings and those of the permanent officials. For the first of these purposes it is indispensable that the range of choice shall be considerably widened. At present, there are very large classes of persons who are prevented, or at any rate strongly deterred, from standing as local government candidates for fear of jeopardizing their jobs. Many employers dislike letting their employees show political independence when they have any means of controlling them; and many are reluctant—some for quite intelligible reasons—to allow time off for employees to attend to the growingly onerous duties of local government service. Both these attitudes are commoner among small than among big employers: indeed, it is in the small firm that *stupid* reactionariness is most apt to occur, and that the absence of one man may make a really considerable difference. There are, again, employers who think it bad for business that their employees should be active in public affairs—especially on the Labour side; and this attitude extends not only to many banks and commercial houses but also to professional workers and to schools and other institutions that might provide local Councillors of high quality. The consequence is that Councils of almost all types have too high a proportion of elderly, retired members, who have no employers to check them and can spare the time, and that, among employed persons and even among employers, membership is weighted heavily on the side of occupations in which no objection is raised to political activity. These conditions seriously lower average quality among Councillors; they impair the electors' interest, because there is so little to get enthusiastic about in most of the candidates from whom the choice must be made; and they increase the duplicity of officials who, faced with stupid representatives of the people, and sure of knowing better themselves what is good for the public, easily come to regard the jobs as mainly a matter of wangling so as to get their own way.

This situation needs to be altered by making it definitely unlawful for any firm which employs more than a certain number of persons (and can therefore be regarded as capable of arranging to replace an absentee) to put any obstacles in

the way of any of its employees standing for, or serving on and attending meetings of, any public authority. This solution, of course, implies that the person so serving would have to be entitled to payment from the public authority for time lost from his ordinary work, and that his employer would be entitled to deduct proportionately from his wage or salary. This would leave unsolved the problem of those who are employed by very small firms; and I think in these cases the employer should be required to demonstrate, before some sort of tribunal, that his business would be seriously interfered with if the employee in question were to be elected to serve on the local Council. Only when he could show this should he be entitled to confront the employee with the alternative of relinquishing municipal service or giving up his job. Of course, in all publicly owned or controlled industries and services, no obstacle at all should be put in the way of the employee's serving on public bodies, except that he should be ineligible to stand for a seat on the authority by which he is actually employed.

In saying what I have said, I am not to be understood as undervaluing the admirable service which retired persons do and can give as Local Councillors. Among such persons are some of the best and the most disinterested. All that I am saying is that there are *too many* retired persons, and that the present *de facto* limitations on service tend to make the average age of Councillors much too high.

Given a better range of choice, what else can be done to secure a more interested and instructed electorate? One thing I have already suggested—that each Councillor should be required, as a part of his statutory duty, to make a regular report to his electors on his own doings and on those of the Council on which he sits, to answer questions, and to transmit local criticisms and complaints. In the case of the small Local Authority, the Councillor would do this by reporting direct to a Ward Meeting open to every local elector, or to a full meeting for the whole Council area where it was not divided into Wards. In the case of larger Authorities, I think his report should be made to a meeting of the smaller Authority of the area for which he had been elected, with less frequent meetings open to all those who had had the chance of voting for him.

In addition to this, I believe that each large Local or Regional Authority should have a Public Relations Officer, whose job it should be to secure publicity for his Authority's doings in the local Press, to arrange special public meetings at which members of the Authority could expound its policy and answer questions, and to act as liaison officer between the Authority and the numerous voluntary bodies within its area with which it needs to keep on terms of mutual understanding. Thus, it would be for the P.R.O. to fix up for a leading Councillor—say, the Chairman of the appropriate Committee—to go and talk to the local Trades Council, or Chamber of Trade, or Teachers' Association, or what not, whenever he heard that serious complaints were being made, or whenever the Council was launching a new policy that it needed to get quickly understood in order to avoid trouble or misinterpretation.

Yet another notion that I should like to see put into effect is that every person elected to sit on any Regional or Local Authority, except the smallest, should become *ex officio* an Alderman of the Authority next down the scale of size for the area for which he had been elected. Thus, a candidate elected to the Regional Authority for East Anglia as member for King's Lynn would become an Alderman of the Norfolk County Council; a candidate elected for King's Lynn to the Norfolk County Council would become an Alderman of the Lynn Incorporation; and a candidate elected for an area inside the Incorporation to the Council of the Incorporation would become *ex officio* a member of the small authority for that area, where such an authority existed.

The notion underlying this suggestion is twofold. It is, in the first place, that of linking smaller and larger Authorities together organically, as they have never been linked hitherto. There has been not a little feeling of mutual hostility between members and officials of larger and smaller authorities which have held concurrent jurisdiction over the same areas—between County Councils and District Councils, for example. This mutual suspicion is doubtless to some extent bound to arise where the lines of functional division are shifting, as they are bound to be. But I feel sure that overlapping membership would tend to make it less.

In the second place, the integration of Local and Regional

Government at its various levels will tend to reduce the authority of the bureaucrats of Whitehall—not of Ministers, but of those peculiar specimens who infest the higher ranks of the Civil Service. I want to see something near to a united front of Local and Regional Government against these well-intentioned martinets, who know all too well how to preserve a united front among themselves. There is another way in which I want to see the bad side of their influence undermined. I want it to become common for men and women to shift to and fro between the services of National, Regional and Local Government, so that the local administrator gets a chance of knowing what national administration is like and, still more, the national administrator gets direct experience of working as the servant of democratically elected local representatives, and learns more about the points of view of people who do not pass their whole working lives between an office desk in Whitehall and a club—one of a few haunted by upper Civil Servants—five minutes' walk away. I am making no charge at all against the whole Civil Service; but I do think there is something quite peculiarly polluting to the human spirit about belonging to its higher administrative hierarchy.

I do not propose to enter into this question further now, because I have said what I have to say about it elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> What is wrong with the Civil Service is not its lack of brains—of which it has, I think, more than its fair share—but its failure to sympathize with the workings of democracy, which can never be either tidy or precise. Untidiness is, after all, for most people part of the essence of getting what they want; and *local* untidiness, by which I mean considerable variation in the ways of getting things done from one place to another, is a vital part of local self-government. Little Puddleton and Little Snoring do not want to be governed in exactly the same way; and Great Irontown and Great Cottontown do not want this either. They want to do the job in the fashion that suits *them*; and that is precisely what the bureaucrat finds intolerable, or at any rate hard to put up with. Yet, if democracy is what we really want, it is plain enough that the local people ought to have matters their own way to the

<sup>1</sup> *A Better Civil Service*. An Essay prepared for the Fabian Society and published in *Can Planning Be Democratic?* (Routledge, 1944.)

fullest extent that can be made compatible with the national planning of those things that *must* be done everywhere in much the same fashion in the interests of social justice or of the necessary minimum of national efficiency. Some things, particularly in the economic field, do call for a high degree of uniformity in execution; but they are not, I believe, mostly things with which Local or Regional Authorities are principally concerned. There is no good reason why schools, or Health Centres, or Civic Restaurants, or most services which directly touch the lives of ordinary people, should be alike all over the country. We only want to make them more alike—those of us who are on the side of the angels—to the extent to which we are trying to push them up everywhere to a tolerable minimum standard. Where such a standard has been reached, we want diversity of experiment beyond it—not uniformity.

In particular, there ought to be no fixed frontiers between those things that are done directly by Local or Regional Authorities, those which are done by voluntary bodies with or without help from public funds, and those which are done in partnership by public and voluntary agencies. In the past, so many of the voluntary agencies engaged in social work have been heavily tainted with a *de haut en bas* type of philanthropic charity, and often so dominated by political reactionaries, that a good many Labour supporters have inherited a deep distaste for voluntary activities, and a presupposition that most things will be more democratically done if they are taken over by a public authority. There is, of course, quite often substance in this view; but it is dangerous none the less, because it tends to pile up in the hands of Local Authorities jobs which could be better done by voluntary agencies, if only they could be organized on a more democratic basis and less under the leadership of 'ladies' with time to spare. The working-class woman, in the majority of cases, has had in the past all too little time to spare for *organized* voluntary effort, though she has given a great deal of time, with scant recognition, to helping her friends and neighbours over difficult spots in their lives. One of the most urgent of all social reforms is to find ways and means of decreasing the drudgery of the ordinary working-class housewife and mother. Nor is it at all difficult to see how a good deal can be done in this respect. Three obvious needs stand out—to provide houses

that really save labour, to give the children a good mid-day meal at school, in holidays as well as in term, and to make it cheap and easy for families to get meals out at a civic restaurant quite near their homes. These three things would at any rate go a long way towards making it easier for women of the working class to play a more active part in both public and voluntary social and communal services, and to enable more voluntary bodies to escape the taint of being run by members of one class for the benefit of another.

It is of the greatest importance that this should happen, both because voluntary bodies are usually the best pioneers in new fields of social service, even if later on the new functions are best taken over by a public authority, and because there are a great many jobs that public authorities can never do well. These latter are jobs which call for a high degree of personal discrimination, so that the essence of doing them well lies in *not* treating everyone alike, but in fitting the treatment to the individual case. Public bodies always find difficulty in doing this, because it leads inevitably, if they do it, to accusations of favouritism and injustice. Voluntary bodies can meet such charges much better, because they are not tied by statutory regulations; and they will in fact have fewer charges to meet, because they will be expected to discriminate, and not to apply a uniform set of rules.

## CONCLUSION

GOVERNMENT, national or local, exists for men and women, and is not an end in itself. The kinds and amounts of government that men and women need vary, both from time to time and from place to place. There are no fixed limits to the scope of government activity, and no fixed lines of demarcation between national, regional and local government functions. This must be the case, both because in some patterns of social structure voluntary, or non-governmental, co-operative action, under the stimulus of ideas of mutual service or of philanthropy in the widest sense of the word, occupies a much larger place than in other patterns, and also because economic, as distinct from social, services can be shared in different proportions between public and private enterprise, and, where they are conducted publicly, can be organized on a larger or on a smaller scale. The scope of Local and Regional Government will accordingly vary both with the total extent of public economic enterprise and with the distribution of control over it between larger and smaller units of government; and it will also vary both with the extent and range of organized social services and with their distribution among national, regional, and local public bodies and voluntary, or non-governmental, bodies of every sort and kind.

The reader of this book will have perceived that my approach to the problems which it discusses is governed by four main considerations. In the first place, I recognize as unavoidable the tendency of modern technical development to call for the conduct of a number of essential public services under unified management over large areas. This applies particularly to economic or 'trading' services, such as electricity and transport; and in relation to such services it may make impracticable the reconciliation of technical requirements with the adoption of areas of management that are at all suitable for other purposes of Regional or Local Government. The tendency to unify certain parts of these services (*e.g.* the generation of electricity or long-distance transport) under

national control, and thus to remove these parts of them altogether from the sphere of local or regional control, is probably irresistible, in face of the technical case in favour of it. The less this has to happen, the better; for modern States are in no danger of not having quite enough to do. But happen it will, to some extent; and the effect will be to take away from Local Government some functions which many Local Authorities have performed well in the past, and have made a source of civic pride, and to transfer these functions not to Regional Authorities, but to national agencies.

Secondly, there are certain services, some of them economic and some social in content, which need to be nationally co-ordinated and planned, but not nationally administered, but do require to be administered, at any rate in many of their aspects, over regional rather than over merely local areas. Gas is one obvious example, from the economic field; and hospital and consultant services as elements in the National Health Service are another, from the social field. A wider example is that of planning itself, in its double aspect of economic planning and of town and country planning; but these two aspects differ, in that economic planning obviously calls for much the larger amount of national co-ordination and control, and indeed for national initiation of the major features of policy. The regional rôle in relation to economic planning is bound to be mainly that of interpreter and adapter of national plans, and also of course that of protestant when such plans fail to take adequate account of regional needs and conditions. In relation to town and country planning, on the other hand, the national function should be rather that of co-ordination of regionally conceived plans than that of planner in any full sense; and the Regional Authorities themselves should be rather planners than the detailed executants of the master regional plans which they prepare. What emerges from my second main point is that there is a second group of services in relation to which the national function is one of co-ordination, or at most of planning, and not of administration as well, and that in some of these services there is plain need for an administrative, or managing, unit on a regional and not on a merely local scale.

Thirdly, there are certain services which, although they call of course for some measure of national and/or regional

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co-ordination, do not need to be administered over areas larger than those of substantial Local Authorities—by which I mean, in the more thickly populated parts of the country, considerable towns together with the country districts round them, and in the more rural parts smaller towns and the country districts which these towns serve as market centres. There is so much difference in size between these town-and-country units—which I have dubbed ‘Incorporations’—from one part of the country to another that it is clearly out of the question for them all to have the same range of functions; and I have accordingly proposed that the County Councils, as major Local Authorities, shall have wider administrative powers as against the smaller than as against the larger ‘Incorporations’. With this qualification, the plan which I have put forward envisages a considerable concentration of administrative and executive, as distinct from master-planning, functions in the hands of the ‘Incorporations’; and this is indeed an integral part of the plan. It is designed to provide areas which will not be rendered unreal by the lapping over of the built-up area beyond municipal frontiers into the territory of quite different Local Authorities, and also to reconcile within a single administrative area the town-and-country elements which must be brought together in the interests both of good planning and of good local administration.

Fourthly, there are a number of services, some falling within the traditional range of local government activity, some outside that range, and some partly within and partly outside, which cannot be performed satisfactorily unless they are managed on a small scale, or at all events unless the inhabitants of the small communities of which larger communities are made up are given a real and influential say in the local management. This requires the existence of recognized small-scale units of Local Government, and requires it, in my opinion, fully as much inside the big towns as in villages or suburbs or ‘satellites’. I am sure that the proposal to create ‘town-and-country Incorporations’ could by no means be made acceptable to rural opinion if it meant that the rural areas were to have, for the future, no distinct Local Authorities of their own. But I am no less convinced that it would be wrong, in unifying the Local Government of towns which are at present split up among several different

authorities, to destroy the representative institutions of such real communities as these separate authorities represent, or that it is necessary, where the growth of large towns has swept out of existence the local government institutions of communities which have been submerged, to restore recognition to these lost communities, and to give recognition to new ones where they have grown up round new suburbs or municipal housing estates.

I have tried to indicate in earlier chapters some of the functions that, I think, should belong to these small 'neighbourhood' Local Authorities, either as of right or by delegation, in all suitable cases, from the major authorities. These suggestions involve an extension of the traditional sphere of Local Government, particularly in the provision of public amenities designed for a way of living in which there will be (a) less sharp class-divisions based on income; (b) fewer domestic servants; (c) much greater equality between the sexes, and much greater revolt by women against unnecessary household drudgery; (d) *more* babies needing to be looked after, and at the same time more employment of married women outside the home; and (e) a 'matier' disposition among the people who live near together, and therewith a keener desire for well-equipped common institutions in which all members of the family, whatever their age or sex, can find real community centres—including places where they can feed together cheaply whenever they so desire.

This England, which I envisage as the setting for the plan here put forward, is thus in its community texture different from the England for which the existing system of Local Government was made. Is it not, however, the sort of England in which most of us, whatever may be our political opinions, expect that in the coming generation we shall find ourselves living? Short of a Fascist revolution, there can be no going back upon the large measures of social equalization, based on lessening of real economic inequalities, that have already come about: nor is it the case that the major part of this achievement can be chalked up to the account of any one political party. No doubt, it would not have occurred if the people had not demanded it, and maybe the people would not have demanded it insistently enough without the stimulus of long-sustained Socialist propaganda. Nevertheless, in the

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event, all the main political parties were, willingly or unwillingly, consenting parties to the major part of the institutional changes which underlie the great practical decrease in social and in psychological inequality.

This diminution of inequality would not, taken by itself, necessarily involve a more communal way of living. It would be possible, under certain circumstances, to devise a way of living which, with the aid of thoroughly labour-saving houses, with everything possible 'laid on', and of a wide variety of 'gadgets' obtainable by every housewife, would greatly diminish the burdens of household labour and therewith make possible greater equality between the sexes, and in effect do most of the things mentioned in the preceding paragraph except arrest the decline in the birth-rate. It would, however, be possible to adopt this alternative solution, with the very serious limitation just mentioned, only on the basis of a much higher general standard of living than Great Britain seems to be at all likely to be able to achieve for the main body of its people for a considerable time to come. The 'gadgetary' solution of the problem of living is expensive: it is open to societies which have abundant sources of wealth at their command, and can afford to be wasteful. It is not, I think, open to a society such as ours, which, for as far ahead as we can see, is likely to be short of a good many things, because of its high degree of dependence on imports for the foodstuffs and materials which lie at the very foundation of its means of living.

We cannot, thank Heaven! imitate the 'American way of life', or produce a more equalitarian version of it based on the same principles of 'gadgetary individualism'. We shall have, because most of us will wish, in the circumstances of to-morrow, to introduce a larger communal element into our ways of living—the more so because we have neither negroes nor Chinamen among us to fill the gaps in the ranks of domestic service, and because we are a more politically minded people than the Americans, and our women will take more readily to running small-scale local government services, as fast as they see that these are capable of being organized for the main purpose of reducing domestic drudgery. There will be, no doubt, plenty of 'conservatives' who will continue to regard 'eating out' as a form of dissipation, to be rarely

indulged in, and will continue to scrub floors and polish brass-work as a matter of domestic pride and to regard it as right and proper, into the bargain, that the toil of the household should never end. But these conservatives, who have a fine side to their house-proud economy, will be found mainly among the older people, and much less among those who have grown up amid the experiences of the past seven or eight years. The more communal ways will come in, because those who have kept servants and can get them no longer will take to them promptly, whereas those who have not kept servants will welcome more and more any lightening of domestic tasks that does not lower the quality of home life.

The things I am talking of, so far from lowering the quality of life in the home, will greatly raise it. They will make for better domestic manners, as well as for more neighbourly intercourse. They depend, however, absolutely on the high quality of the provision made by, or with the close collaboration of, the smaller Local Authorities—on the pleasantness of the food and of the conditions of eating in the local Civic Restaurants, on the club-like quality of the Civic Bars and Tea-rooms, on the good building and equipment of Community Centres and other places of common resort, on the provision of really nice parks and playing fields, and, not least, on the adequate supply and excellence of Day-time Nurseries, Infant Welfare Centres, and local Citizens' Advice Bureaux in politely staffed local Civic Centres. Most of all, in effect, do they depend on an immense enlargement, on the right lines, of the Social Service professions, and on the recognition of these professions as among those calling for the very best training as well as for the highest personal qualities. Finally, they depend on friendly working together of those engaged in public and in voluntary social activities, and on the devising of a satisfactory pattern of collaboration between the two groups of functions.

Idealistic? Utopian? Or just plain hell? It all depends on who you are, and on how you look at the whole business of living in a community. Some people—and I am one of them—have been in a position so far to live very pleasantly—thank you!—without needing to have much more than a nodding acquaintance, if that, with their neighbours, or needing to take any interest in Local Government as long as the rates were duly paid. At least, that was so until the war caught up some

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of these people into a nearer sense of neighbourhood, because their next-door neighbour felt ever so much nearer to them when a bomb fell next door but one. For most people, life never was like that pre-war life of the comfortably-off, who were just not interested in the schools or the social services which the Local Authorities provided, partly at their expense, for families poorer than theirs. I can quite understand that for some people who have been able to live thus apart from the main body of their fellow men the notion of an extension of the field of Local Government into such things as the provision of communal restaurants and clubrooms and day nurseries may seem, not utopian, but just horrible. And yet, is it not bound to happen? The existence of a class of domestic servants, except to look after people who cannot look after themselves, or to serve professionally in hotels and restaurants and other institutions, is a by-product of conditions of social inequality. We cannot all—we cannot, most of us—have servants to minister to our needs. Most of us, in any society, have to look after ourselves, or rather to share out the domestic labour in one way or another within the family group. This method has always hitherto involved a heavy, an excessive burden of labour on the woman who has been at once housewife and mother. To-day, such women have votes and wills of their own: they will no longer be put upon by the menfolk as they have been through the ages. That is not the least important part of the democracy we are supposed to be building. It is to be a democracy for the women, as well as for the men. And democracy for women involves, we shall find, large changes in familiar ways of living that have rested on sex inequality. One thing that this change will alter profoundly is the content of Local Government.

The kind of Local Government that will be most affected by sex equality is that of the small unit. Other forces are shaping new patterns of government, betwixt local and national, on a regional scale. The outstanding feature of such relatively large-scale Local Government as we possess to-day is the unreality of the foundations on which it rests; for what can be more unreal than a City Council which administers the affairs of half a city, or than a County Council which has the most populous parts of the county snipped out of its administrative area, or than an Urban District which is really neither

more nor less than a bit of a town, or than a Rural District which consists of the bits left over after the urban authorities have carved out the pieces they want? No one could possibly have planned or wanted a local government structure even remotely resembling that which actually exists; and yet any conference of representatives of any type of Local Authority can be relied on to reject any proposal for amendment that does not leave its own type intact. This book is a plea for a Regionalism, side by side with a revival of small-scale 'neighbourhood' government, that will certainly provoke strong opposition from a high proportion of those who are actively concerned with Local Government in its existing forms. Yet . . . will not most of these people agree that reform is needed, even if they cannot agree on the shape which reform should take? I think they will; and, if so, I ask them at all events to think twice before they turn down flat every element in the solution which I have advanced. Of course, I have not got it all right; who could? But is there not something to be said for my view that we need to create, and to give real power to, both *larger* and *smaller* units of administration than have been favoured by the trends of local government evolution in recent years?

## APPENDIX A

### A PROBLEM AREA

THE part of England that presents the greatest difficulty to anyone who attempts to devise a regional planning scheme is the group of counties extending from the northern and western limits of Greater London to a line drawn, as a segment of a very large circle, from the Wash to the point where the four counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire join. This group includes the following counties:—Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire. I am assuming the complete inclusion of Middlesex in the Greater London area, together with a small part of Hertfordshire. This leaves eight counties, with an aggregate population of about two millions outside Greater London, to be considered. In the scheme embodied in the text of this book, I have proposed, with some hesitation, that four of these counties—Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire—should form an Eastern Region by themselves—that one of them—Berkshire—should go with Hampshire to form a Southern Region; and that the other three—Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire—should be grouped with Leicestershire and Rutland in an East Midland Region.

There are a number of difficulties about this grouping. The northern part of Berkshire belongs as clearly with Oxfordshire as its larger southern part does with Hampshire; and there are close connections already between the three counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire for a number of purposes, including Adult Education. These three counties, however, seem hardly strong enough to stand alone as a separate Planning Region; and I feel sure it would be a mistake to join Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire with Hampshire in a single Region. North Oxfordshire has close connections with Northamptonshire: Banbury indeed should clearly go with either Northamptonshire or Warwickshire. West Oxfordshire shades off imperceptibly into the Cotswold country of Gloucestershire: east Oxfordshire is part of an indivisible area with Buckinghamshire. Whatever arrangement is adopted, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire must go together; and, if the three are felt to be sufficient to form a separate Region, they had better go together.

One possible way of strengthening them would be to add to the Oxon-Berks-Bucks group the county of Hertford, as far as it is not included in Greater London.<sup>1</sup> I doubt, however, if this would work well. Hertfordshire would group satisfactorily enough with

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Buckinghamshire; but it has much more in common with Bedfordshire than with either Oxfordshire or Berkshire. Indeed, I think Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire ought clearly to go together. Bedfordshire, however, goes naturally with Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. But this grouping involves a further problem, because North Cambridgeshire—the Isle of Ely—which has at present its separate County Council, has many common problems with the Soke of Peterborough—which is part of Northamptonshire—and with the Holland division of Lincolnshire, as well as with the adjacent parts of Norfolk. It would be an advantage to get the whole Fen Country planned as a unit, under a single Regional Authority; but it clearly cannot be done without cutting right across a number of county boundaries, and this I have avoided proposing save in a very few extreme cases.

An alternative to the Eastern Region which I have suggested would be to include Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire with Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex in the East Anglian Region. I considered this, but rejected it on the ground that the problems of the two groups differ too widely—to say nothing of the badness of their communications. I think these three, with Hertfordshire, form a just sufficient basis for a separate Region—though I should have liked to throw in the Holland division of Lincolnshire, with Boston, and the Soke of Peterborough.

Northamptonshire, with the possible exception of the Soke, clearly goes with Leicestershire and Rutland, in an East Midland, or South Midland, Region. Either Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire form a Region by themselves, or, if not, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire go with Northamptonshire into the East, or South, Midland Region, and Berkshire goes with Hampshire. There must, however, in this latter case be some adjustment of boundaries, in order to include a small section of Berkshire with Oxford and its environs. No solution is entirely satisfactory; and, though I have, for convenience, used one rather than another in the text of this book, I have an open mind.

## APPENDIX B

### ELECTRICITY AREAS

IF any proof were needed of the incompatibility between the requirements of Regional Planning and regional administration of the general services associated with Local Government, the draft scheme of areas for the Area Electricity Boards proposed in the Electricity Bill of 1947 would help towards providing it. This scheme is designed to secure the co-ordinated distribution of electricity over wide districts, in such a way as to achieve, wherever possible, a satisfactory balance between urban and rural areas and an economical distribution of the load over the different times of day. It is, of course and inevitably, affected by the existing structure of company and municipal undertakings, and to some extent by the regional schemes on the basis of which the Grid administered by the Central Electricity Board was originally constructed. The areas proposed for the Area Boards differ, however, from those of the original 'Grid' schemes, not only in being more numerous, but also in the way in which the boundaries are drawn.

The 'Grid' plan, which dealt only with generation and main-line transmission of electric current, and not with distribution to the consumers, divided all England and Wales into 7 areas. It threw Northern and Central Wales in with Lancashire and the North-West of England, and South Wales into a great South-Western area stretching from Cornwall to Hampshire, inclusive, and from Gloucestershire to Buckinghamshire. It included London in a South-Eastern area which ran from Cambridgeshire to Sussex, but left Norfolk and Suffolk as a separate Eastern area, in which Essex was not included. It had a 'Central England' area which included both the East and the West Midlands, and a 'Mid-East England' area covering all Lincolnshire as well as the West and East Ridings of Yorkshire. The North Riding it grouped with Durham and Northumberland in a North-Eastern area; and it assigned Cumberland and Westmorland to the North-Western area, which also covered rural Wales.

The new scheme dealing with distribution is radically different. It has 12 areas for England and Wales. South Wales, including Monmouthshire, becomes a separate area. North Wales is still grouped with a part of England, but this area, based on Merseyside, includes only Cheshire and a small part of Lancashire—the Merseyside conurbation with Warrington and St. Helens and the coastal strip up to the Ribble estuary. The remainder of the North-West, including Cumberland, Westmorland and the sparsely populated north-western corner of Yorkshire, goes into a North-

## ELECTRICITY AREAS

Western area based on Manchester, the boundary between this area and the Merseyside and North Wales area running through heavily populated industrial and coalfield districts. York, with Harrogate and the north-eastern part of the West Riding, as well as the North Riding and a small piece of the East Riding, goes with Northumberland and Durham to form a North-Eastern area. The main part of the West Riding goes with the East Riding, North Lincolnshire and small pieces of northern Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire to form a Yorkshire area. South Lincolnshire, the main parts of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and the whole of Leicestershire and Rutland, are united with nearly all Northamptonshire, the greater part of Warwickshire (including Coventry), and northern Buckinghamshire, and also with a small section of Staffordshire, to form a very large East Midland area. A West Midland area, including the Birmingham conurbation, covers most of Staffordshire and the whole of Worcestershire and Herefordshire, most of Gloucestershire (but not the Bristol district or the south-eastern part), the north-western and south-western parts of Warwickshire, and most of Shropshire (of which the north-western corner is grouped with Cheshire and North Wales).

In the South-West is an area including Bristol and most of Somerset, the whole of Devonshire and Cornwall, and the south-western corner of Dorsetshire. This adjoins a Southern area made up of Wiltshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, most of Dorsetshire, a slice of East Somerset, south-eastern Gloucestershire, all Oxfordshire (except a corner towards Aylesbury), Southern Buckinghamshire, Western Middlesex, a long slice of Western Surrey, and the western half of West Sussex. Greater London forms a separate area, but with boundaries very narrowly drawn, especially on the north-west and in Essex. A South-Eastern area includes Kent, except the parts assigned to Greater London, most of Surrey, all East Sussex and the eastern half of West Sussex. Finally, there is an East Anglian area, made up of Norfolk, Suffolk, most of Essex, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, with part of the Soke of Peterborough, including the town itself, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Mid-Buckinghamshire with a corner of Oxfordshire, and the northern part of Middlesex.

I have given this account in some detail in order to emphasize the extent to which the proposed Electricity Areas cut across existing county boundaries, and even across the lines of any arrangement of Regions likely to meet with the approval of geographers or town and country planners in connection with projects of regional grouping for purposes of planning or administration. I have not the technical knowledge that would be needed for appraising the merits of the scheme put forward in the Electricity Bill; but I can hardly suppose it to be so far wrong that any technically sound amendment of it would bring its areas into correspondence with any demarcation of Regions suitable for more general purposes.

## APPENDIX C

### MEMORANDUM ON THE REORGANIZATION OF WATER SUPPLY

I HAVE thought it worth while to print as an appendix a memorandum on Water Supply which I wrote for the Nuffield College Social Reconstruction Survey, of which I was then Director, in June 1942. Since this memorandum was written the Milne Committee on Water Supplies has made its report, and two Acts of Parliament dealing with the subject have been passed into law. Neither of these Acts, however, embodies any of the principal reforms which I believed in 1942, and still believe, to be urgently needed. Both were passed under the Coalition Government and were mainly based on proposals drawn up before the war, and designed to preserve the existing system with the minimum of structural change. The first, the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Act of 1944, had as its principal feature the provision of grants of £15 millions for England and Wales and £6,375,000 for Scotland, for the extension of piped water supplies in rural areas. This was in itself a thoroughly desirable step, but it left the main organization of the water services untouched. The second Act, the Water Act of 1945, made the Ministry of Health the responsible department for all schemes of water supply and set up a statutory Central Advisory Committee on Water Supplies (to replace the existing non-statutory committee) and a number of Local Joint Advisory Committees. The Act included provisions to facilitate the compulsory acquisition of land in connection with water schemes, and also made provision for the amalgamation of water undertakings, with some measure of compulsion in the last resort. It further to some extent enlarged the powers of Local Authorities as water undertakers; but it did nothing to bring about a major reorganization of the service either nationally or regionally. Almost everything that I proposed in my memorandum of 1942 still remains to be done.

### *MEMORANDUM ON THE REORGANIZATION OF WATER SUPPLY prepared in June, 1942, for the Nuffield College Social Recon- struction Survey*

1. The supply of water is an essential public service which has to be regarded from two distinct though related points of view. Adequate supplies of pure water are essential to healthy living under modern conditions, not only in towns but also in

country areas. From this point of view, water supply is an integral part of the public health service; and it has been mainly in this connection that legislation providing for its development has been enacted. But water supply is also essential to industry and to agriculture; and very large quantities of water are used by industrial undertakings and on the land. These aspects of the matter have been dealt with much less in past legislation largely because the State has not hitherto assumed any responsibility for the location of industry or for industrial or agricultural development, which have been regarded as falling within the sphere of private enterprise. Local authorities, however, have been compelled to concern themselves largely with industrial water supply, because the prospect of economic development within their areas is greatly affected by the adequacy of local supplies of water, and by the conditions of supply to industrial undertakings. Rural authorities have also concerned themselves with the supply of water to farms; but their powers and achievements have been relatively small.

2. The central department hitherto responsible for dealing with matters of water supply has been the Ministry of Health. This is natural for historical reasons, both because water supply has grown up mainly as a public health service and also because water undertakings have been mainly in the hands of local authorities. More than four-fifths of the water supply of Great Britain is already in the hands of public undertakings: the water companies and other private undertakings supply less than one-fifth of the total.

3. Locally, the supply of water has been a responsibility of the county boroughs, municipal boroughs, urban districts and rural districts. Parishes also have power to develop water supplies available within their own areas. In addition, water is supplied in a number of areas by Joint Boards, and in others by statutory companies. The total number of authorized water undertakings in the country is therefore very large. In England and Wales alone there were in 1939 about 530 local authorities and 15 joint boards supplying water under the Public Health Acts; 260 local authorities and 33 joint boards supplying water under powers given by Local Acts; 173 companies acting under Private Acts, and about 80 others operating without statutory powers; and upwards of 1,000 private proprietors supplying small areas. To these must be added Parish Councils administering local water resources, and a very large number of industrial concerns which arranged for their own private supplies—to say nothing of consumers supplying their own domestic or agricultural needs from wells, springs or streams situated on their own property. Local authority undertakings of all types, it is estimated, supplied in 1939 a population of about 27 millions, as against a population of about 6 millions supplied by statutory water companies. Many of the undertakings supplying water for public consumption are

very small and inadequately equipped. Moreover, local government boundaries have seldom been drawn with any regard to their suitability for the supply of water.

4. Something has been done to introduce an element of co-ordination by the establishment in some areas of Joint Boards, set up either under the Public Health Acts or under Local Acts; and some of these Boards serve considerable areas. There are also in many parts of the country Regional Water Committees, which provide for consultation between water authorities dependent on common sources of supply and often promote schemes whereby the larger authorities can undertake developments designed to serve the needs of their neighbours. But these committees are only advisory; nor do they exist over the greater part of the country. Where they do exist, they have done useful work in surveying and allocating available water resources; but their powers do not extend to the direct establishment of unified water undertakings.

5. In practice, most of the larger undertakings owned by local authorities supply areas considerably larger than those of the authorities which own them. Most Local Acts promoted by local authorities provide for the direct supply of considerable areas lying outside the local boundaries; and besides the outside areas in which supplies are afforded directly to consumers there are other areas which receive bulk supplies from the major authorities and themselves provide for the further distribution. Moreover, where large authorities embark on big schemes for bringing water from a distance the Local Acts invariably give rights to the authorities through whose areas the trunk mains pass to purchase water from the larger authorities, usually at cost price. Thus the undertakings of the great cities serve populations much larger than those dwelling within their borders, and the development of their undertakings has been an important factor in carrying supplies at a low cost to smaller areas which could not have afforded to supply themselves adequately at the local ratepayers' expense. It is, however, fortuitous for smaller places to be situated on the supply lines of the great cities; and very large parts of the country are remote from such sources of supply.

6. There has never been any full national survey of water resources; and no plan has ever been made for the allocation of the available resources in accordance with national needs. An Inland Water Survey Committee was established in 1935 at the Ministry of Health, and had done useful work on a limited scale before its operations were suspended after the outbreak of war. But this Committee had neither adequate powers nor an adequate staff, and it could do no more than urge water undertakings, Catchment Boards, and other responsible bodies to keep adequate records and try to put the business of gauging and recording on a more regular and scientific basis where it could secure the voluntary

co-operation of the bodies concerned. It had no statutory power; and Catchment Boards in particular were often very reluctant to spend money on survey work, and some water undertakings were also reluctant to disclose relevant facts. It was clear well before the war that much more comprehensive measures were needed, both for the study of surface water supplies and in conjunction with the Geological Survey for the study of underground sources.

7. In the absence of an adequate survey of resources and of any authority responsible for the allocation of supplies, the great cities, which were being driven farther and farther afield in search of supplies, were left to scramble for the best sources of supply, subject to the necessity of getting any major schemes of development through Parliament by means of Local Acts. Such local Bills have been liable to meet with opposition on a variety of grounds—from other areas coveting the same sources of supply, from persons or groups interested in fly-fishing or in preventing the alienation from agricultural or other uses of the land needed for reservoirs and works, or from areas on the trunk lines of supply demanding the right to receive water from the mains of the authority responsible for the scheme. There has also been much trouble over the routes to be followed by the trunk mains and over the alienation of water from local use. Where supplies are derived from rivers other difficulties arise, especially in relation to what is called ‘compensation water’, *i.e.* the amount of water which the water authority is to be compelled to send down a river which it has dammed up, or to make available to those whom the damming up would otherwise deprive of their unrestricted use of the river in its previous condition. It is held by practically all water experts that the existing provisions dealing with ‘compensation water’ are unfair and obsolete, and in particular that they make far too little distinction between rivers of different types—for example, between those with a fairly steady and those with a highly variable flow. Changes in the methods of assessing ‘compensation water’ have been repeatedly proposed, but nothing has been done. Other difficulties occur where water authorities draw supplies from rivers without damming up. In these cases a limit is usually imposed on the quantity to be taken from the river; but trouble arises over the placing of the responsibility for the prevention of pollution of such supplies, as this is usually a matter for the river authority (or Catchment Board) and not for the water undertaking. Considerations of these kinds, which largely affect agriculture, make the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as the Ministry of Health, an interested party in most major plans for water supply.

8. The Ministry of Agriculture comes in also in another way, as the responsible department in connection with land drainage under the Land Drainage Act of 1930. This Act, which consolidated and amended the law relating to drainage, established a

number of Catchment Boards for large areas, and dealt also with Drainage Boards for smaller areas, which may be either inside or outside the regions covered by Catchment Boards. These drainage authorities operate at present entirely apart from the bodies responsible for water supply; but there is evidently a case for creating some sort of co-ordination in the interests of full use of available water supplies and prevention of waste of water and of pollution of rivers and water-courses from which water undertakings derive supplies.

9. At present, it is in general in the interests of the undertakings responsible for water supply to reduce, rather than increase, the demand for water. Domestic consumption of water is usually charged for, not in proportion to the quantity used, but by means of a water-rate based on the rateable value of the premises. Additional charges are usually made for garden water and car-washing, and sometimes for sanitary appliances beyond an already obsolete minimum standard. But these additional charges are not based as a rule on the actual amount consumed. Water for industrial purposes, on the other hand, is charged for as a rule by meter; and the same system is applied to hospitals, hotels, and other institutions which consume large quantities of water. But even in these cases it is seldom to the advantage of the supply undertaking, in a pecuniary sense, to encourage increased consumption, which may involve expensive capital works—to say nothing of the difficulty which may be encountered in finding sources of supply. It is broadly true that water undertakers, unlike almost all other producers, have an interest in reducing consumption, or at all events in preventing its expansion at a rapid rate.

10. The foregoing paragraph refers only to water consumers who receive their supplies from the public mains. It is a point of substance that consumers who supply their needs from private wells escape making any contribution to the cost of the public supply, despite the fact that this forms a vital part of the public health service of the area concerned. It is in the general interests, of industrialists as well as of private citizens, that the areas in which they carry on business shall be adequately supplied with pure water, for on this depend the health conditions which make it possible for their workers to be free of typhoid, cholera, and other diseases. When, as often occurs, special price-concessions are made to industrialists who take their water from the public mains, it should not be forgotten that the effect may be to exempt them from making the appropriate contribution to the cost of the essential services of the area.

11. Large areas of the country, especially rural areas, are still without any adequate supplies of water. Probably half the houses in rural areas are still entirely without a piped supply; and there

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is also, even in normal times, a serious water shortage on many farms. In times of drought the situation is of course much worse; and the legislation of the two pre-war decades has only touched the fringe of the problem. Moreover, in many towns, especially the smaller, the existing provision for the distribution of water is seriously defective.

12. In modern housing schemes, adequate water supply and adequate provision for its use are rightly regarded as indispensable. Any large post-war housing scheme is bound to lead to a big increase in the domestic demand for water. Consumption of water in gallons per head per day has been increasing rapidly in recent years as a consequence of the equipment of new houses with modern sanitary appliances, including baths, wash-basins, and running water. As an indication of the possible growth of demand it may be mentioned that consumption in gallons per head per day (including industrial consumption) stood in 1939 at about 44 gallons in London and nearly 60 in Glasgow, as against 140 in New York. A normal full domestic bath requires about 35 gallons; so that if every person in London took a bath a day there would, at the 1939 rate of consumption, be under 10 gallons per head left for all other purposes, including industrial uses of water.

13. If conditions of living in the countryside are to be made more attractive in connection with a general improvement in the economic position of rural workers, the extension of a proper water-supply throughout the rural areas will be an indispensable part of the programme of rural development, and one which in most areas the existing local water undertakings will be wholly unable to meet.

14. In addition, any large projects for the building of new towns, or for changes in the location of industry, will involve considerable expenditure on the supply of water. A part of the needed expenditure has been incurred already, as part of the cost of building Royal Ordnance Factories and other wartime establishments; and it will be essential to ensure that these capital works are made full use of in schemes of post-war development.

15. In view of these needs, a radical change is called for in the organization and control of water supply. It has to be borne in mind that the execution of water projects on any considerable scale has usually taken a very long time. Five years often elapse between the approval of a project and its completion; and in the case of major projects carried out by great cities the period may easily be as long as ten years. Accordingly it is necessary for water development to be planned a long time ahead and to be based on long-term estimates both of local population and of local industrial requirements. The correct pattern for the post-war

development of water supply cannot be determined in detail except on the basis of known decisions affecting the location of industry and population. But the planning of water supply, for both domestic and industrial uses, is an integral part of the wider process of town and country planning and of the planning of industrial development.

16. This suggests a doubt whether the central responsibility for water supply ought to remain with the Ministry of Health, on a purely departmental basis, especially now that the supervision of town and country planning has been transferred to a separate Ministry. This doubt is reinforced by the consideration that water development calls for extensive constructional work in the field of civil engineering, and therefore appears to fall naturally within the scope of the Ministry mainly responsible for town and country planning. On the other hand, it is of the greatest importance to maintain the purity of all water supplies, and their adequacy on the basis of a higher standard of cleanliness, and to ensure the adequate control of all water undertakings from the standpoint of public health. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that the water question shall be handled with a due regard for agricultural interests, and that there shall be some link between the authorities responsible for it and for land drainage in the various catchment areas. It is perhaps unnecessary to make any special provision for the interests of fly-fishermen, as the Houses of Parliament can be relied on to pay sufficient attention to their claims. These considerations, taken together, strongly suggest that the right solution may be to establish some sort of autonomous national water authority, closely related to all the departments concerned, including the Board of Trade, as the department primarily concerned with the location of industry, and the Scottish Office.

17. These requirements can best be met by the establishment of a National Water Commission, or body of Commissioners, with functions in some respects analogous to those of the Electricity Commissioners and in others to those of the Forestry Commission. This body could consist of a small number of full-time Commissioners, and could be given the dual function of preparing plans for the development of water supplies in accordance with the directives of the Government, and of supervising the execution of these plans and the administration of the water services by the local or regional bodies in whose hands the actual operation of them would be placed. It is not suggested that the proposed Commission should itself own or operate any water undertaking; it should be a planning and supervisory, and not an operating, authority. There is no case for a 'Water Grid' similar to the grid administered by the Central Electricity Board over the country as a whole. Water supply calls for regional, or in some instances for inter-regional, as against either local or national administration. But it also calls for national planning and supervision; and these

tasks need to be carried out in close co-operation with the authorities responsible for planning in other fields.

18. The National Water Commission should not be a representative body. It should consist of full-time members appointed for a period of years, and of course subject to renewal in the ordinary way, by a Minister—presumably a Minister of Planning, should such an office be created, or, failing such office, the Minister deemed most appropriate. The responsible Minister, before nominating the members of the Committee, should consult the persons best able to advise him concerning the technical and administrative aspects of the water service, but should make his own appointments at his discretion after seeking this advice. The Commission should be given sole discretion in the appointment of its own staff, who should not be ranked as Civil Servants or be made subject to Civil Service conditions of employment. If it were desired to introduce an element of local or regional representation in connection with the proposed Commission, this could best be done by setting up, side by side with it, a National Advisory Council, consisting of representatives from each of the Regional Water Boards proposed in a later paragraph, together with persons nominated to represent Water Engineers, Regional Planners, Agriculture, and any other groups deemed worthy of special consideration.

19. There is a strong case for establishing the proposed Water Commission now, without waiting for the end of the war. It has already been pointed out how long major schemes for the improvement of water supplies take to carry out; and it has also to be emphasized that the prerequisite for a satisfactory scheme is a thorough national survey of resources, with a view to their allocation in accordance with national needs. Moreover, the entire legal code affecting water needs overhauling. The existing provisions in respect of 'compensation water' are unsatisfactory: and the law gives inadequate protection against the pollution of supplies, including underground supplies, which will have to be called increasingly into use. The first tasks of the Commission should be to set on foot a thorough survey of resources and, simultaneously, to prepare a new water code for presentation to Parliament. These are necessary preliminaries to effective planning for the post-war period; and if they are delayed until the war is over, it will be impossible even to begin upon properly conceived development projects without long delays.

20. The proposed survey of water resources should include the preparation of detailed maps of areas of supply. The want of any such maps covering the country as a whole has been in the past a serious handicap to water undertakings. It has been the practice of Parliament as far as possible to refuse consent to local proposals to make use of water supplies from distant sources until evidence

has been given that local sources have been exploited to the full. But in the absence of a thorough survey it has not been easy in all cases to make this principle effective. The survey would probably bring to light many local sources which have been overlooked or inadequately used. Provision should be made by the National Water Commission for keeping the survey continuously up to date; and it should be empowered to require water undertakings, Catchment Boards and other river authorities, and other appropriate bodies, to keep adequate records, and authorized to make grants for this purpose from public funds. It should also be instructed to co-operate closely with the Geological Survey, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and the British Rainfall Association (now under the Air Ministry), and should be made responsible for co-ordinating the whole of the available information, including historical information, relevant to water resources and supplies.

21. The proposed survey would provide a basis for a rearrangement of areas and authorities. Whatever may be the general structure of local government after the war, there is no reason to suppose that the local government areas which are appropriate for other purposes will coincide with the areas most suitable for the development of water resources. The local distribution of water may possibly remain as a function of some local authorities: the development of supplies intended for use outside the areas in which they are 'produced' is assuredly a matter for special authorities able to operate, subject to co-ordination in the national interests, on a regional or inter-regional basis, and over areas based on geographical rather than political considerations.

22. What is suggested is that the Commission should map out the whole country into a number of water regions, for each of which should be constituted a Regional Water Board, representative, as the Metropolitan Water Board is now, of the local authorities within the Region. In order to reduce the membership of the Regional Boards within manageable dimensions, only the larger authorities in their areas should be given direct representation, the smaller authorities being grouped for this purpose. This practice has been followed with success in the case of the Metropolitan Water Board; and it has much to recommend it. It is of great importance that local representatives upon Regional bodies shall regard themselves primarily, not as representatives of the localities for which they sit, but as jointly responsible for good administration over the entire Region. Indeed, any other attitude would make it difficult to justify the retention of the representative principle in constituting the Regional Boards. Even so, it may be desirable for each Regional Board to have, in addition to its representative members, a nucleus of full-time appointed members, chosen exclusively on grounds of personal capacity. At the least, each Regional Board should have a full-time Chairman, to be

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appointed by agreement between the National Water Commission and the Regional Board.

23. The Regional Boards should have, in the first place, the duty of making full use of the water resources available within their own territories. They should operate under schemes drawn up for them by the Water Commission; and these schemes could provide either for the complete taking over, by the Regional Boards, of all water undertakings within their areas, or for the retention, subject to their control, of approved schemes managed by existing water authorities. In general, it would seem best for the smaller undertakings to be taken over completely by the Regional Boards, or perhaps in some cases to be transferred to the larger undertakings within the Region. Even where a district could manage to produce an adequate supply from its own local resources, the exploitation of these resources by a Regional body would both conduce to economy in working through superior technical efficiency, and provide the means of enforcing a higher standard of purity, and would also ensure that any surplus which the district could provide would not be wasted, but would be available for transfer to other districts. It would be desirable, where an adequate supply could be obtained more cheaply from purely local sources, for the Regional Board to continue to provide it in this way, under regional management. Regional management does not imply that all the undertakings within the Region ought to be connected with a single set of mains, or indeed physically linked up with any of the major undertakings. Large and fully efficient water undertakings serving great urban areas could, if this were thought desirable, be allowed to preserve their identity; but it would be necessary to include in the Regional schemes full provision for the use of their trunk mains to supply other areas within the Region, and it would probably be advantageous, if local opposition could be overcome, to transfer all undertakings within the Region to the direct management of the Regional Board. Alternatively, the more efficient of the local water authorities could be retained solely as distributors within their areas, the ownership and management of the trunk mains and the sources of supply being transferred to the Regional Boards.

24. As a safeguard against the ignoring of local interests, any local authority within the Region could be given the right to make representations to the Regional Board, and, in the event of disagreement, to bring its complaint to the National Water Commission, which should have power either to disallow the complaint or to make an order to the Regional Board to carry out any part of the local authority's proposal for which it might consider a good case had been made out. Such orders would have to be made binding on the Regional Boards.

25. It would clearly be impossible for each Region to be self-supporting. A number of the great cities already draw a large

part of their water supply from very distant sources, *e.g.* Birmingham and Liverpool, which both depend on extensive works situated in Wales. It should be the aim of the Water Commission to ensure that no Region should draw on sources outside its own area where it could at reasonable cost render itself self-sufficient; and plans should be based, wherever possible, on the full utilization of supplies within each Region. Any use of supplies drawn from outside the Region should be subject to the provisions of a scheme drawn up and authorized by the Commission after consultation with the Regional Board covering the area from which the outside supply would be derived, and where necessary with other Regional Boards. Similarly, within each Region the scheme drawn up by the Commission for the Regional Board would provide for the fullest possible use of local supplies in order to reduce the distribution of water over long distances within the most economical limits.

26. The objects of the plans to be drawn up by the National Water Commission should be (a) to ensure an adequate supply of pure water to every householder in the country, subject only to the exception that remote isolated dwellings might have to be excluded on grounds of cost, and (b) to ensure adequate supplies of water for all industrial, agricultural, and other non-domestic users in accordance with the requirements of the authorities responsible for national economic planning.

27. It seems clear that water for domestic and non-domestic uses should be charged for in different ways. In respect of domestic supplies, it is highly desirable to increase consumption while avoiding waste. This can best be done by retaining the existing system of basing water charges on rateable value, and at the same time enforcing by local or regional bylaws higher standards of domestic plumbing and introducing some supervision of water appliances. Owners of existing premises should be compelled to re-equip them in accordance with modern sanitary standards; and dwellings which fail to reach such standards should be put in proper order by the local authority at the owner's expense, or condemned outright where they cannot be brought up to a satisfactory standard. In connection with new housing developments it seems undesirable that the cost of laying water-mains should be borne by the house-owners either directly or by being passed on to them by building speculators. It would be better for the water authorities to bear these costs, recovering them in the water rates levied over the entire area supplied. Similarly, the balance of advantage appears to lie in making water-rates uniform over large areas, rather than recovering the cost from parishes or districts within a Region. The cost of domestic water supplies is bound to be higher in scattered than in densely populated districts: but as such supplies are to be regarded as constituting a part of the public health service rather than as a 'public utility', there

appears to be a clear case for the equalization of burdens over large areas.

28. Non-domestic supplies, or at any rate supplies for industrial use, are on a different footing. Charging by meter seems in this case to be the appropriate method; for economy, rather than high consumption, is here the object at which policy should aim. It is entirely legitimate to use the inducement of cheap water as a means of persuading industrialists to establish works in areas in which it is desired to foster industrial development; but such concessions should be reckoned as part of the costs of industrial planning and should not be debited to the other water consumers in the area. For example, Industrial Trading Estates should pay the full price for water supplied to factories established under their auspices; and the cost of any rebates or exceptional charges should be borne by the Estate authorities, and not by the water undertaking. Similarly, if it is decided as a matter of national policy to make cheap water supplies available for agricultural use, the cost should be borne as a public subsidy to agriculture, and not by the other local consumers of water.

29. It should be one of the functions of the proposed National Water Commission to provide a technical inspection service, for the double purpose of promoting efficiency in working and of ensuring proper standards of purity of supplies. It is not suggested that Medical Officers of Health should lose their local responsibility in this matter, or that the system whereby the Metropolitan Water Board is made responsible for inspecting its own supplies should be given up. What is proposed is that there should be a double check.

30. The National Water Commission should be empowered to draw up, subject to the approval of Parliament, bylaws regulating the rights of owners of land to sink wells and abstract water. These rights, which are at present unlimited, very seriously interfere with nearby wells sunk by water undertakings, and are inconsistent with treating water supplies as a national possession to be used in the best interests of the public as a whole. Underground oil supplies have already been declared by Parliament to be national property. It is highly desirable to apply the same rule to water, which is a vital asset of the nation.

31. It has been suggested in an earlier paragraph that there is a strong case for co-ordination between the authorities responsible for water supply and the bodies dealing with land drainage, catchment areas, and similar questions. The existing Catchment Boards and Drainage Boards are at present under the general supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture. It has been pointed out that pollution of water supplies can easily arise when sewage is passed into a river or water-course above the point at which a water undertaking takes water from it. One way of dealing with this problem would be, while leaving Catchment and Drainage Boards distinct

from and independent of the Regional Water Boards, to make both types of authority subject equally to the supervisory powers of the National Water Commission, which would thus serve the double purpose of a national authority for both water supply and land drainage. This would make it necessary to strengthen agricultural representation on the National Water Commission. Alternatively, a National Drainage Commission could be set up parallel with the National Water Commission and could be made responsible to the same Minister, and through him to Parliament. But this second solution might involve undue interference by the department with the technical and supervisory work of the Water Commission; and on that ground it seems that the first alternative is to be preferred. Consideration could be given at a later stage to the expediency of **transferring** in any area the functions of a Catchment or Drainage Board to the Regional Water Board; and the National Water Board should be empowered to recommend such transference, to be made by statutory order, subject to parliamentary approval not being refused.

32. There should be, either attached to the National Water Commission or working in close connection with it, a tribunal empowered to arrange the terms on which existing water undertakings should be transferred to the proposed Regional Boards. This is a matter which raises issues far wider than those affecting the water service alone; and presumably the same general principles of compensation will have to be observed in all cases in which undertakings hitherto under municipal or company ownership are being taken over by the State or by any new board or corporation acting under public authority. The question is therefore not dealt with in this memorandum, and it is left open whether municipal undertakings are to be transferred without compensation, beyond the transfer of outstanding debts, or are to be regarded as private property subject to compensation on the same basis as company-owned undertakings. This question is of special importance in the case of water because of the high proportion of the service that is already owned by local authorities. However it may be settled, it seems clear that there will have to be some sort of independent tribunal to decide the amount of compensation payable to company-owned undertakings. It is assumed that all company-owned undertakings will be taken over and thereafter operated directly by the Regional Boards.

33. The Regional Boards should be empowered to raise loan capital for development, with or without a Treasury guarantee, subject to the approval of each proposed issue by the National Water Commission. Alternatively, the National Water Commission could itself be empowered to raise loan capital, and to re-lend it to the Regional Boards.

34. Any money voted by Parliament for such purposes as the improvement of rural water supplies should be administered by

## REORGANIZATION OF WATER SUPPLY

the National Water Commission, which should be empowered to make grants in aid of such schemes. Grants for this purpose could, after the initial period of reconstruction, be so arranged as to secure higher expenditure in times of bad trade, in accordance with the recognized principles of 'public works policy'.

35. In order to obviate the necessity for private Bill or local legislation in connection with schemes of water development, power should be given to the National Water Commission to lay draft schemes before Parliament in the form of statutory rules and orders, which would become operative in the absence of hostile decision by either House. In hotly contested cases, the alternative could be given of proceeding by way of Provisional Order Bill. In either case, any scheme put forward with the authority of the National Water Commission would be sponsored by the Government, and it would be essential for the Commission to have someone to speak for it in Parliament. This duty would presumably be assumed by the Minister primarily responsible for planning; but in the absence of any decision about this responsibility it is impossible to make a definite recommendation at this stage.



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